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RELIGIONS OF AUTHORITY

RELIGIONS OF AUTHORITY

AND THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

BY

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TRANSLATED BY LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON

NEW YORK
McCLURE, PHILLIPS & CO.
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Published, February, 1904, N
THIRD IMPRESSION

NOTE

It is with a sense of obeying the will of him who is no more that we publish this work. The task is at once very grateful, because it seems to us like giving a sort of survivorship to his thought, and very sorrowful, from the bitterness of our consciousness that he is no longer here to perfect his own work, and to present it himself to the public in the concise and literary form which he would have given to it.

On December 2, 1900, my husband joyfully called me to him, saying, "I have put the last period to my book." And while I was congratulating him, he added: "Now I shall let it rest during our journey to Egypt and Palestine. It will take me three months to revise it on our return, but I shall not modify its form, for I have said that which I desire to say. If accident befalls me during the journey remember this: my book must come out *whatever happens.* There it lies," he continued, turning to his desk; "you will give it to Ménégoz and Roberty, who will both willingly revise it; but *it must appear!*" He repeated the words with emphasis, separating each syllable to show that this was his well-considered determination.

Although he had long been out of health, he had no idea that his disease would progress so rapidly, and when I spoke to him of rest he would say: "I have work planned out for two hundred years," or else, "I hope to die in my professorial chair." This hope was almost fulfilled, for on the 5th of February my husband gave a lecture, and returned home, literally staggering, to take to his bed.

It was an immense disappointment to him to give up the journey to Palestine, for which, on the very evening before, he had been making preparations. He had long dreamed of the journey as the crown of all his toil.

On December 30, 1900, we were alone together in the country. I took an atlas, and while he, shivering over the fire, with closed eyes, described the hoped-for journey, I, wondering, followed on the map the outlines of the Lake of Tiberias, the picturesque features of the country, which he described as if he had seen them. He was listening to the words of Christ, looking upon the places where they had been spoken, describing to me the prospect which Jesus had before his eyes as he spoke. It was a never-to-be-forgotten evening.

During the twenty-five years that I had the privilege of sharing his life I never ceased to wonder at the prodigious powers which enabled him to accomplish a truly superhuman task. He worked incessantly and everywhere, undisturbed by noises, conversations, the children's plays, music, bursts of laughter: nothing interrupted or confused his thought. The activity of his brain was so intense that it drew heavily upon his physical strength. Worn out by his labours, he gently breathed away his life on April 12, while praying, "Our Father, who art in heaven."

It is impossible to give adequate recognition to the zeal of those friends who have kindly revised this volume, with all its references: M. Ménégoz, the chosen partner of his theological thought, his brother-in-arms; MM. J. Emile Roberty, Jean Réville, Adolphe Lods, who had been more or less his pupils, and who, having become his colleagues, were bound to him with unalterable affection. With pious respect they have hardly touched the form of this work, preferring to leave some repetitions rather than risk weakening the thought, and not daring to undertake the work of condensation which its author would have performed. When he had written out all his thought he was never weary of cutting down, pruning, seeking for greater clearness and conciseness.

Thanks, therefore, to all you, his true and faithful friends. Though the book lacks its last fine touch, at least those who know how such labour is done will see with what a sure hand the master craftsman blocked out his work, how firm was his design and how definite his thought, from the first sketch.

FRANKLINE SABATIER.

PREFACE

This volume forms a sequel to the work which the author published in 1897, under the title, "Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion based upon Psychology and History."

Two systems of theology still confront one another: the theology of authority and the theology of experience. They are characterised by methods radically opposed in the scientific development of religious ideas and Christian dogmas. To the solution of the question of method the present work is consecrated. At the present hour one method is dying and destined soon to disappear; the other is taking on ever more vigorous development, and is destined to triumph.

The problem here discussed belongs not simply to the order of philosophy. It reacts strongly upon the social order. In fact, the relations between civil and religious society, between Church and State, necessarily differ in character according as religion is conceived of as an inner inspiration upspringing in human consciences that have been tilled and sown by the divine Spirit, or as a supernatural institution charged by a higher and external authority with the education, training, and government of human spirits. In the first case religion becomes inherent in civil society itself, as it is in the human conscience; it acts beneath the surface, like the hidden sap that awakens the winter-bound tree to the new life of spring, yet neither suppresses nor does violence to its legitimate development. In the second, on the contrary, religion claims external authority as a divine law to which all human laws must yield, as an extra-human truth which the intelligence must receive with docility, as a tutelage, in fact, to which man must submit. Hence inevitably arise those irremediable conflicts, less violent among Protestant nations,

because the authority of Protestant dogma is always relative, more profound and acute among Catholic peoples, by reason of their moral customs, and their concordats, which latter, it is true, may moderate the violence of these conflicts, but leave untouched the fatal root of all the evil.

In France, especially, the religious question underlies all political agitation. The strange alternation of movements of revolt and of reaction, between which the country oscillates, is both consequence and symptom of a fundamental religious problem existing in its political life, ever ill stated and ever wrongly solved.

Nevertheless, it is not in the least degree from a political point of view that the question is treated in these pages. Such problems demand to be persistently studied and meditated by themselves and for themselves alone, without prepossession either of dislike or favour, in the sole interest of truth. This book is in no sense a work of polemics. Whether discussing the Catholic or the Protestant dogma of authority, our intention has not been to refute either, but before all things to give a historic explanation of their formation and their destiny. Every system has its immanent logic which impels it toward its point of perfection, and thus revealing its internal inconsistencies or insufficiencies, impels it no less irresistibly to dissolution and ruin. The history of a dogma is its inevitable criticism. Revealing the laborious method of its formation, it explains its origin; pointing out the elements which have entered into its composition, it defines its nature; and finally, making manifest the changes which, from epoch to epoch, have taken place in general ideas, the new configuration of the historic soil upon which these constructions of the past repose, it lays bare their foundations, and by that very act reveals their transient and contingent character. In this sense Schiller's saying is true: *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.*

In an argument against the systems and method of authority we have not wished to impose upon the reader the necessity of believing us upon our own word. We have supported each important affirmation

by authentic citations. This part of our work is that which has cost us the most labour.

This volume is especially offered to students, to those who read not for mere amusement, but for instruction's sake, and who seek in these matters to reach a reasonable, sound, and accurate conviction. Such will here find bibliographical directions which may aid them in their own researchés. The list of citations is far from complete; it was necessary to be content with those that are essential.[1]

More than ever we are convinced that psychology and history are the two nursing mothers of religious philosophy. Our former volume was simply a work of psychology and history, and nothing else will be found here.

PARIS, *August* 14, 1899.

[1] Appendix I.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

I

The Conflict of Methods

To the thinking man a discord between methods is a graver matter than an opposition between doctrines. The antagonism which has arisen between traditional theology and the kindred group of all other modern disciplines is of this kind.

In the former the method of authority still reigns.[1] The latter depend only upon experience. It follows that between the two there can be no bond nor any common standard.

It is the property of the method of authority to base all judgment of doctrine upon the exterior marks of its origin and the trustworthiness of those who promulgated it. In religion this method appeals to miracles, which accredit God's messengers to men, and stamp their words or writings with the divine imprint.

On the other hand, the modern experimental method puts us in immediate contact with reality, and teaches us to judge of a doctrine only according to its intrinsic value, directly manifested to the mind in the degree of its evidence. The two methods are so radically opposed that to accept the latter is at once to mark the former as insufficient and outworn.

It sometimes happens that the advocates of the former, to make it the more acceptable, reduce it to the necessary and legitimate use of testimony admitted in matters of history. It is easy to show the confusion which must follow. Historical testimony, derived from men who

[1] Appendix II.

are recognised as fallible and limited, is always received subject to caution, and the truth which the historian draws therefrom is simply the result of the comparisons which he institutes between various testimonies, and the verification to which he submits them. Thus the foundation of historic certainty is still evidence verified by rational criticism. Quite otherwise is the method of authority. The testimony upon which the argument is based is the testimony of God. The point of departure is the axiom that it is reasonable and just that human reason should subordinate itself to the divine reason, should indeed be silent and humble before it. All reasoning of this kind avowedly or tacitly implies on the part of the thinking subject a declaration of incompetence, and as a consequence a conscious or unconscious act of abdication.

In the Middle Ages the method of authority, lording it over the human mind, dominated in all sciences. A proposition of Aristotle, an utterance of Scripture, a dictum of the Fathers, a decision of a council, settled officially, and for most men quite as fitly, a problem of physics, astronomy, or history as a problem of morals or philosophy.

One stands astounded on ascertaining how great was the authority of the ancients in the schools up to the end of the seventeenth century. Yet this infantile method was vanquished on the day when Galileo and Bacon opposed to it in the realm of physics the method of observation and experiment, and when Descartes, in philosophy, subjecting all traditional ideas to a provisional doubt, resolved to accept as true only those which appeared to him to be evidently such. It was an intellectual revolution of incalculable importance, which put an end to the long minority of the human mind by asserting its autonomy.

To say that the mind is autonomous is not to hold that it is not subject to law; it is to say that it finds the supreme norm of its ideas and acts not outside of itself, but within itself, in its very constitution. It is to say that the consent of the mind to itself is the prime condition and foundation of all certitude. This principle explains the character, the independence, and the marvellous expansion of modern culture during

the past three hundred years. If theology persists in subjecting itself to an ancient method from which all other disciplines have freed themselves, it will not only find itself in sterile isolation, but it will expose itself to the irrefutable denials and unchallengeable judgments of a reason always more and more independent and certain of itself.

Without doubt, if religion could remain in the realm of pure sentiment, it would be beyond the jurisdiction of science; but religion expresses and realises itself in doctrines and institutions which cannot be exempted from criticism. These doctrines, which bear upon their face the indelible date of their birth, implicate as to the constitution of the universe, the history of the early ages of humanity, the origin and nature of the writings in the canonical Scriptures, certain notions borrowed from the philosophy and general science of a bygone period of human history. To force them upon the philosophy and science of to-day and to-morrow is not merely to commit an anachronism; it is to enter upon a desperate conflict in which the authority of the past is defeated in advance.

This is why traditional theology appears to be always in distress; one by one she abandons her ancient positions, having been unable to find security or a basis of defence in any of them. Let astronomy tell the story of the heavens, or geology that of the earth; let Egypt, India, or Assyria reveal its past; let historical criticism study the texts and monuments of antiquity; let Darwin and his successors relate the evolution of creatures and the history of life upon our globe, and some section of the sacred walls is inevitably undermined, and the entire edifice of ancient beliefs seems shaken to its foundations.

It may perhaps be said: Granted that with the method of authority theology cannot maintain its dignity as a true science; is it yet certain that it can survive without this method?

Thus, in the eyes of the majority, the problem of authority becomes a question of life or death for theology, and even for religion. To forestall a hasty conclusion, let us first of all point out to troubled minds

that a change of method does not necessarily entail the destruction of a science. The latter can disappear only if the object of its study vanishes. Now the religious phenomenon is the permanent object of theology. So long as the religious phenomenon of Christianity is repeated, so long it will continue to be necessary to study it, to determine its conditions, its nature, cause, and significance. The experimental method destroyed the astrology and physics of ancient days, but it created a new physics and a new astronomy. Why should not the same method, adopted by theology, have the same fecundating and rejuvenating effect? And if this transformation is not logically impossible, why should it not be justified in the eyes of the Christian conscience as well as in those of history and philosophy? To this question the studies collected in this volume are meant to reply; and for this radical revolution it is their purpose to prepare.

II

Authority and Autonomy

The conflict of methods ends in the antinomy between the authority of tradition and the autonomy of the mind. These are two historic and social puissances, which, though often opposed one to another, are none the less allied and correlative. In the moral progress of humanity, and in the acquisition of learning, it may be said that they play equal and equally necessary parts. It is important, then, before going farther, to take account of their relations.

These relations at once lead back to those of the individual with his species. Authority is the right of the species over the individual, autonomy is the right of the individual with regard to the species.

In metaphysics there is no problem more important than that of the relation of the particular to the general, of the individual being to the universal being. The question, at bottom, is to know whether the spirit shall be subordinated to the creature or the creature to the

spirit; whether in the phenomenon of consciousness, which is necessarily individual, we are to see an accident without meaning or the manifestation of the true being. In the former case all individuality, mere ephemeral efflorescence, is engulfed in a materialistic pantheism; it has just the degree of reality, and the destiny, of the wave that ceaselessly swells and falls back upon the face of the rayless ocean. In the other case, *individualisation*, that is, the persistent production of more distinctly marked individualities, ever more stable and more clearly conscient, becomes the very law of universal evolution. Consciousness appears as the final cause, and hence as the profound reason of things, and where it takes on a moral character it is crowned in the eyes of the whole universe with an inviolable and sacred majesty.

Yet this is only half the truth. While tending to individuality the world tends neither to anarchy nor to disorder. Individuality does not exhaust the phenomenon of consciousness. In every consciousness there is a new principle of unification, the germ of an order grander and more beautiful than the material order which is maintained by physical laws. Side by side with individual energies, which doubtless cause division and separation, is there not in the intelligence itself an element of generalising reason, and in the heart a principle of sympathy, a law of fraternal love, bringing individual wills into concord and unity? Solidarity, which in nature is a ruthless fact, becomes in the realm of the spirit a moral ideal, a holy obligation. Should it not be the task of humanity as it emerges from nature, and rises into the life of the spirit, to realise and to make apparent above the physical universe that moral universe which reproduces all its riches, and all its harmony in a higher plane, and with an ineffable glory?

For it is a fact that the moral consciousness does not appear at the beginning of evolution, nor does it at any moment burst suddenly into being all luminous and perfect. It emerges slowly and laboriously from the night of nature. It cannot establish itself without subordinating physical laws to its own laws, hence contradictions and repeated con-

flicts. Thus there is always a double relation between nature and the spirit; nature remains for the moral consciousness a necessary support which it has no right to despise, and at the same time an obstacle which it ought to overcome, and a limit which it must overpass. In a positive sense, nature prepares for the advent of the spirit; this is its reason for being. In a negative sense, the spirit can triumph only in raising itself above nature. Let us here descend from metaphysics to history. In the light of these principles the relations between the species and the individual will be easily defined.

Every individual life is from the beginning determined by the collective life from which it emanates. Man is not born adult or independent. Little by little he differentiates himself from the species, as the child emerges from the matrix in which it was formed. If none should live for himself, it is because none exists by himself.

I belong to my race, to my family, by my organism. The fact of my birth has determined in advance the conditions of my life and the outlines of my destiny; it has made me a white man and not a negro, a European, a Frenchman of the nineteenth century, (instead of) a savage and a barbarian. Upon my nurture depend not only my health and my race instincts, but also my intellectual faculties and my moral inclinations; from society, in the bosom of which I grow up, I receive my education and all my ancestral heritage. In fact, my being is like a body immersed in an encompassing and penetrating fluid.

Heredity, which imposes upon me the irresistible bias of ancestral life; political order, which shuts me up in its decrees; custom, which in time becomes second nature; historic tradition and testimony of my fellows, which extend my life in time and space and enlarge my personal experience to embrace the total experience of humanity—who shall show the limits of the empire which species exercises over the formation of the individual, and over the course of his destinies?

All these influences are concentrated and made active by relations which they are continually creating and developing. Authority of the

family, authority of the school, authority of the tribe, of the city and the Church; these are conservative and educating potencies, without which the progress of civilisation and moral culture were not even conceivable.

Authority, then, has its roots in the organic conditions of the life of the species, and its end in the formation of the individual. This essentially pedagogical mission at once justifies and limits it. Like every good teacher, authority should labour to render itself useless.

What does the man become under this tutelage? From his parents and masters the child receives his language, his ideas, his manner of life, his very ways of thinking and feeling. At the outset his trust is entire, his faculty of testing and of criticism almost null. But soon, by the very process of education, his reason awakes and grows stronger. From thenceforth he carries within himself an inward judge who summons to his tribunal, and judges by his own law, the things which surround him, and those which are taught him. He will know for himself the world in the midst of which he lives; he tests by his own experience the statements of his teachers. The latter may no longer rely upon the prestige of their authority; they are obliged to give him proofs and reasons; they must persuade him if they would gain him, and if in his turn he expresses an opinion, it is no longer upon the faith of others, but as the result of an inward ordeal to which he has submitted it. Thus the method of direct intuition and experiment succeed the method of authority, not by the way of arbitrary evolution, but progressively, and as the necessary effect of the development of the conscience and the reason. And what is the education of mankind if not the passage from faith in authority to personal conviction, and to the sustained practice of the intellectual duty to consent to no idea except by virtue of its recognised truth, to accept no fact until its reality has been, in one way or another, established.

A like evolution toward autonomy has gone forward in the history of humanity. Only it has been slower and more stormy. Emerging

from the state of nature, humanity tends to the state of reason, but it has not yet arrived there. The heavy chains of primitive animality still weigh it down, and it is only by throwing off those that are outward, transforming and spiritualising those that are within, that it can rise to liberty and light, and establish itself at last in the moral security of the autonomous conscience. Authority which is purely exterior is neither reasonable nor disinterested. It ought to be a guide, but it grows blind; tutelage becomes tyranny. The past is continually struggling for self-perpetuation against the future which is sure to dawn. Hence those conflicts, crises, revolutions, martyrdoms, which make the path of the human race a road to Calvary. The son of man is perpetually climbing it, bearing his cross.

And yet the goal is there, and this goal is the enfranchisement of the spirit. History is a moral pedagogy, whose vitality lies in this perpetual struggle between the autonomy of the conscience and social authority. Of this struggle are born all the problems which civilised peoples to-day have to face.

In the political order it is the conflict between the governing class and the governed. The authority of the former has long been maintained by virtue of the might of victorious strength, or the sovereignty of divine authority. The awakened reason asks authority for its credentials, and the latter may present only such as are reasonable. In one way or another it must show that it acts only for the greatest good of the governed, and exists only by virtue of their consent. To reconcile the autonomy of the citizen with the necessities of the social order: this is the political problem.

The same conflict exists in the economic order between capital, which, being accumulated wealth, is also the authority of the past, and labour, which represents the present effort of living energy. Labour will no longer be the slave of capital; it also aspires to autonomy. To conciliate the autonomy of labour with the necessities of the industrial order: this is the economic problem.

In the bosom of the family the same cause produces the same results. What is it that has so notably weakened the ancient authority of the father over his children and domestics, and of the husband over his wife? Whence comes the struggle now going on in all civilised nations between woman and man? It is the same principle of autonomy, which, gathering strength from all that develops the forces of the mind, so disquietingly shocks the deepest foundations of the old world. To reconcile the rights of the moral personality of woman and child with the existence and the unity necessary to a family, this above all others, is the social problem.

In the order of religious and philosophic thought, the antagonism is not less acute, nor the crisis less threatening. The dualistic conception of the natural and the supernatural, the antithesis of a world exterior to God and a God exterior to the world, acting and reacting upon one another from without, the government of the world by those catastrophes which we call miracles, the supernatural authority which the churches draw from this method to substantiate their claim to impose their irrational dogmas upon the faith of the simple, and govern minds as the kings of the earth used to govern bodies, all this old system has succumbed under the irresistible activity of the emancipated philosophic reason. Here, again, autonomy in revolt first of all showed the way to irreligion and atheism, just as, in politics, it engenders uprisings and causes strikes in the industrial order, and the free union in the family order. Violent explosions always make ruins, but ruins are not solutions. To reconcile the autonomy of thought with the indefeasible laws of the moral consciousness, scientific freedom with faith in the God who is spirit: this is the religious and moral problem—more profound and urgent than all the others.

The relations between authority and autonomy are, then, neither simple nor easy, because autonomy and authority are not fixed quantities, but states essentially unstable, and always yet to be. It must be clearly understood that the passage from one system to another has as

its ineluctable condition, so far as man is concerned, the passing of the animal life into the life of the spirit. The sovereignty of external authority is weakened only when that of reason and the conscience begin and increase. As the reptile may not hope to soar in upper air before growing wings and becoming a bird, so the man who continues to live a purely animal life may not aspire to a true autonomy. Violent agitations may achieve a change of master, but they cannot bring the man out of slavery. Here the nature of the being determines the conditions of his life. The animal can but serve or disappear.

This is the vicious circle in which those revolutionaries are turning who dream that by violence they can put an end to a system of authority. If they join forces to oppose a greater material strength to that which the hated authority commands, they may, indeed, triumph over it, but the victorious strength, being merely brute strength, must necessarily create a new rule of authority, which will be as much more burdensome as the strength which founded it was more irresistible. Thus, in the French Revolution, we saw the despotism of absolute monarchy give place to the tyranny of the Convention, and this, after a few years of anarchy, disappear before the military tyranny of Napoleon. Material forces were opposed to and beaten by forces greater, but of the same nature. Reason is to liberty, and to the harmony of spirits, that which the law of gravitation is to the movements of matter. Reason can assert no influence over the movements of bodies, weight can do nothing with the organisation of spirits. The sole way of escape from the action of brute force is the consciousness of yielding full obedience to the inward law of reason.

Authority is a necessary function of the species, and for very self-preservation it watches over that offspring in whom its life is prolonged. To undertake to suppress it is to misapprehend the physiological and historic conditions of life, whether individual or collective. Itself both pedagogic method and social bond, it may be transformed, it cannot

disappear. Pure anarchists are unconscious dreamers. The species and the individual, tradition which is the experience of the past, and the experience of to-day which will be the tradition of to-morrow, are data equally positive and inviolable. Their reciprocal play, the actions and reactions which flow from them, are the very warp of history. None may with impunity isolate himself from his race and his social cradle. None may dare, without forfeit, to renounce the benefits or the burdens of the solidarity which unites him with his brothers, his forefathers, and his children. We should fall to the level of the brute if each one had to begin for himself the work of the ages. Individuality itself would thus find its ruin, for individuality is the child and heir of the labours of the entire human race, which alone, by preparing its moral and material conditions, have made possible its appearance. Why, then, is the civilised man less a slave to the fetters of nature than the savage? His present autonomy rests upon the authority of tradition, and is its fruit.[1]

Humanity does not exist outside of the individual man, or without him; the individual man does not exist outside of humanity and without it. The individual and society are the object one of the other. Their apparently contradictory rights are, in reality, mutual duties. The moral dignity of a society is measured by what it does to educate and form the personality of its members, the moral dignity of an individual by what he does for his brothers, and for the social body to which he belongs. The well-being of one necessarily depends on that of the other. Where individuality is weak, without initiative or energy, the social body, whatever its extent in space, is neither strong nor really great. That society which, to maintain itself, oppresses individual souls, and sacrifices their rights and their culture to its own tranquillity, is like a mother who should devour her children. The individual who, by his own selfishness, exploits or destroys the social bond, is the perverse or heedless child who, to warm himself, sets fire to the house of his fathers. Social authority and individual autonomy are not more hostile, and can

[1] Appendix III.

no more legitimately be opposed to one another, than the final destiny of man from that of humanity.

And yet authority is never other than a power of fact. This is to say that it cannot be the philosophic explanation nor the ultimate reason of anything. A provisional and intermediary condition, a method of protecting the good acquired in the past, the explanation of authority lies in that which preceded it, and its justification in that which must follow it. When we accept political, philosophical, moral, or religious decisions, we suppose them, and those who promulgate them always suppose them, to be just and reasonable. An authority, whatever its nature, convicted of injustice and unreasonableness, falls under the dominion of the mind of him who submits to it. Whether willingly or unwillingly, authority must own the control of reason. In the historic evolution of humanity it represents a rational condition which maintains it as long as itself endures. When the condition is outworn authority must perforce change, whether it will or not.

Formerly the father of the family had the power of life and death over his children and slaves, and could be called to account by no one for the way in which he treated them. Kings and priests had a power no less absolute over their subjects or their flock. Not very long ago the King of France, of his sole will, could throw a citizen into the Bastile; the French father could put his daughter into a convent, and the Church, with the aid of the civil power, could send a heretic to the scaffold. Why is all this impossible to-day?

An established authority, however great its antiquity or its power, never carries its justification in itself. It must show itself reasonable to the awakened reason which demands its credentials. By that fact it has been changed. The fact must show itself reasonable, or, in other words, the budding law of reason tends to change itself into fact, by modifying the inward state. Authority can maintain itself only by becoming more moral; by placing its supporting point always less apart from man, always more essentially within the man himself. The authority of

material force, of custom, tradition, the code, more and more yields place to the inward authority of conscience and the reason, and in the same measure becomes transformed for the subject into a true autonomy. The sphere of rule is not decreased; much the contrary; the rule will be so much the better obeyed as it becomes immanent in the conscience and the will of man, and identifies itself with his own moral nature. Theft is a crime which public force represses. My property will be much better guarded if I live among thoroughly honest people than it could be by the intermittent vigilance of the policeman if I lived among thieves. The fear of the court-martial does not always deter the conscienceless soldier from deserting in the face of the enemy; but if patriotism has possession of me as a sacred duty, this sentiment will be more efficacious to make me a soldier faithful to the flag than all the threats in the world. There is all the difference between legality and morality, between abstaining from evil and virtue.

Far from leading to anarchy, the true autonomy, which is and can be no other than the true obedience and inward consecration of the soul to the law of goodness, can alone bring about the highest order and entire harmony.

Being essentially progressive, and far removed from the state of perfection, neither authority nor autonomy may be posited as absolute. They act upon one another for mutual strength, and together they aspire toward the same ideal of right and justice. Autonomy, in action, transforms authority by gradually displacing its seat. So much the more does authority contribute to the development of autonomy. From their interaction results the progress of humanity.

Thence it follows that every historic authority demands at once respect and criticism; respect because, being the expression of a given tradition, custom, social state, it brings us an inheritance by which we have profited and shall continue to profit; criticism, because by elevating our conscience and reason, this very authority no longer represents anything other than a bygone phase of evolution, and its only reason

for being must be a new progress. Free inquiry, with regard to authority, is not only a right, it is a duty. The new truth discovered by free inquiry is older and more venerable than the most venerable authority. After his years of school and apprenticeship, man is called by the very seriousness of life to revise the opinions of his master, to accept the heritage of the past only for what it is worth, to conduct himself toward the institutions of his country, with a view to making them better subserve the common good. This is the progress of human affairs; they never make better advance than when they are freed from the injurious constraint of a superstition which renders authority incapable of progress, or a revolt which destroys it. The new generations which submitted to authority now exercise it in their turn, and if they have truly profited by the experiences of their elders, they will exercise it after a much more reasonable and useful fashion.

To conclude: Authority, in its true conception, is, and can be no other than relative.

III

Of Authority in Matters of Religion

This theory of the national genesis and social function of authority will easily be granted for the ordinary course of human things in general. But when the question is of religion, men stop and protest. They postulate for it an authority of another sort and origin, without which, they say, religion cannot be maintained. The divers religious orthodoxies differ, as to the form or the seat of authority; some put it in the Bible, others in the Church; but they are in accord as to its nature.

All of them claim that the authority which they have constituted within themselves is the expression of a divine authority. Supernatural in its institution, it must be infallible in its teaching and its decrees. This dogma becomes the foundation and guaranty of all the others.

The method of authority asserts itself, and religion, sheltered from every commotion, remains motionless in the midst of universal mobility.

Thus the question which is the object of our study is seen to be at least sharply circumscribed and defined. We are not concerned with those natural, historic, and human authorities, which are born of the very force of things, and are modified according to the evolution of the reason and the conscience, whose right of censure they accept or endure. Nothing is more natural, nor more easy to conceive and justify, than that authorities of this order should be organised in religious societies, and particularly in the Christian Church, to exercise the same tutelary and pedagogic function, respond to the same needs, and tend to the same end—the spiritual autonomy of believers.

Who would deny, from this point of view, the action of the Church and the Bible? Doubtless we must make reservations here; nothing that takes place in history is perfect: light and shadow are everywhere mingled and everywhere in conflict. The family itself, sweetest and holiest of institutions, has been found capable of being an instrument of tyranny. But, taken all in all, where shall we find a higher or more universal school of respect and virtue than in the Church, a more efficacious means of comfort and consolation than the communion of brethren, a safer tutelary shelter for souls still in their minority? And what part played in history is comparable to that of the Church in the history of European civilisation? On the other hand, what can we say of the Bible which would not fall short of the reality? It is the book above all books, light of the conscience, bread of the soul, leaven of all reforms. It is the lamp that hangs from the arched roof of the sanctuary, to give light to those who are seeking God. The destiny of holiness on earth is irrevocably linked with the destiny of the Bible.

Christianity can neither realise nor propagate itself without the Church; the Church cannot live without the Bible, that original source and classic norm of the religious life, as it is manifest in the Church itself. These are potencies of fact, of historic authority, and in their

order come into being in no other way, are no otherwise developed and made active, than are political and pedagogical institutions in the civil order and in general culture.

But just as in former times a political school, not satisfied with recognising natural rights, and anxious to defend the monarchical orders, sought to clothe its power with a supernatural and divine right, so the dogmatic of the ancient Fathers wrested the Bible and the Church from history, misapprehended their relative and conditioned character, and erected them into immediately divine authorities and infallible oracles. From that time the Church and the Bible have no longer been simply school teachers, who help the child to discover the truth for himself, and afterward to possess it in himself; they have been the model and matter of truth itself. From methods naturally designed to lead men to faith, they have become the first objects of faith. The first, and often the last article of the *credo* of more than one Christian, is to believe in the Bible. Strictly speaking, this dispenses with the others, since the others are contained in this, and depend upon it.

Thus were formulated and established the fundamental dogmas of the Roman Catholic system and of the old Protestant system; the supernatural authority of the Church, and the supernatural authority of the Bible, implying, as an inevitable consequence, the infallibility of one or the other. The critical examination of these two dogmas is laid upon us.

What method shall we bring to it? Only one is of value to-day—that dictated by the scientific spirit. In the order of the moral sciences, it is the historical and critical method, including at once the testimony of psychology and of history. Is there in the course of historic evolution any trace of the supernatural institution of an external, infallible authority, with mission to rule over all religious spirits? How were formed those dogmas which make this divine institution the first article of the Christian faith? These are questions of fact which, before all other things, depend upon history.

We shall, therefore, put aside from the outset all abstract or utili-

tarian arguments *a priori*, which encumber the subject, such as these: God, having given to men a supernatural revelation, must have instituted a supernatural authority, as much to preserve it from alteration, as to interpret it without error; or, The greater part of our knowledge comes from the testimony of others; we live by authority, therefore there *must* be an infallible authority to teach us religious truth; or again: The benefits of the Church and the effects of the Bible excel all others, therefore the Church or the Bible, or both, *must* have been instituted by a miraculous act of God himself. It needs only to analyse such arguments to perceive that they move in a vicious circle, taking for granted what ought to be demonstrated, or that they are insufficient because of the infinite distance between the premisses and the conclusion.

For more cogent reasons we shall pass over the political argument to which the name of Joseph de Maistre has been attached, and which is summed up in his famous book "Of the Pope": The question is not whether the Pope is infallible, but whether he must be infallible; there is no religion without a church, there is no church without government, there is no government without a sovereign power, which definitely, and without appeal, sets a term to all controversy and debate. This is confusing infallibility of right with sovereignty in fact; it makes religious truth a political fiction. It is an open profession that there is neither law for the conscience nor truth for the reason. Political minds may admire these reasonings, and make use of them; no philosophic spirit will ever bow before them. Against the brutal fact which would overbear it, the reason lifts up an imprescriptible protest.

Furthermore, every dogma has a history; a history which, while explaining it, also judges it: *Die Geschichte ist ein Gericht.* In the history of any doctrine there is an immanent dialectic which successively throws all its aspects into relief, deduces from them all their consequences, exposes all their contradictions, so that to follow the process is to learn how a system, an institution, a dogma, are formed, and to appreciate their value.

Such is the method which we shall apply to the problem of authority in religious matters. The first two books of this work will be consecrated to the history of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant dogmas of authority. In the third, we shall ask whether the very nature of Christianity does not exclude every rule of authority, whether the authoritative forms which until now it has worn were not, in the earlier period of its history, survivals of the antique religions which it believed itself to have abolished and replaced; finally, whether the religion of the Spirit ought not to be, by that very fact, the religion of personal faith and of freedom.[1]

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 6, 17. See Descartes, "Discourse upon Method," 1635; Schleiermacher, "Monologues," 1800, "Der christl. Glaube Einleit.," 3. Ausg., 1835; F. G. Fichte, "Die Bestimmung des Menschen," edit. 1845; Ketteler, Bishop of Mayence, "Freiheit, Autorität, und Kirche," 3d edit., 1864.

BOOK I

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOGMA OF AUTHORITY

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CHAPTER ONE

DEFINITION OF THE DOGMA

THE Roman Catholic dogma of authority took about sixteen centuries for its constitution and definition. The contemporaries of Irenæus and Tertullian saw its birth; in our own day we have seen its completion at the Vatican Council. In this long labour is condensed and summed up the entire evolution of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is open to anyone to discern a divine work in this process of history; but even then it must be admitted that, in this case, the ways of Providence coincide and make one with the action of historic causes, which have never ceased, during this long period of time, to unfold their natural consequences. Miracle or mystery is in no part of this work, and another Montesquieu would find no more difficulty in explaining the singular history of Papal Rome than the first found in making intelligible the no less astonishing greatness and decadence of the Rome of kings, consuls, and Cæsars. In default of genius, we believe that the patient and attentive study of events and of texts, considered in their progress and their interrelations, will suffice.

I

The Formula of the Dogma

WHILE in full agreement in professing the general principle of the infallible authority of the Church and its tradition, Roman Catholics before the Council of 1870 were profoundly divided by the question: What is the seat of this principle, and what its organ?

Since the end of the Middle Ages the theologians and jurisconsults of the Church had been divided into three schools. One followed the teaching of the University of Paris in the fifteenth century, and the Councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basel; they placed the supreme authority in the Council General, and recognised its right to censure the Pope, and even, in case of need, to depose him for cause of scandal or heresy.[1]

More moderate and more conciliating, above all things unwilling to expose themselves to the danger of a rupture with the Roman See, or of misapprehending the prerogative of those whom they believed to be the successors of Peter, Gallicans like Bossuet placed authority, not in the Council alone, nor in the Pope alone, but in their definitive and necessary agreement. This collaboration and harmony represented in their eyes the plenary and total union of the Catholic Church, to which alone the promise of infallibility had been made.[2] Finally, the third school, the ultramontane, of which Joseph de Maistre and Louis Veuillot were the most ardent apostles during the first half of the nineteenth century, placed the Pope above the Council General, anathematised the Gallicism of Bossuet, and claimed for the person of the vicar of Christ alone the supernatural privilege of infallibility, the right and power to define the faith and to decide all controversies.

Thus three conceptions of the Church and its government confronted one another. According to the first, the Church was an aristocratic republic (the body of bishops), whose president might be nominated and deposed at need by the Council General, the authentic representative of the whole body. According to the second, the Church was a constitutional monarchy, the law of which resulted from the consent and accord of the two arms of power. And, finally, according to the third, it was an absolute monarchy, in which all rights and powers were concentrated in the person of the sovereign and flowed from him.

This last doctrine was destined to triumph in the end, because it

[1] Appendix IV. [2] Appendix V.

was imbedded in the logic of the generative principle of Roman Catholicism.

Doubtless it was entirely unknown in the early centuries of the Church, although Cyprian and Augustine did indeed unwittingly posit its premisses in their theory of the *Chair of St. Peter*. But it was affirmed with great brilliancy and power in the theocratic programmes of Gregory VII, Innocent III, and Boniface VIII.[1] If it underwent an eclipse in the crisis of the Papacy in the fifteenth century, it was not slow to reassert itself in the sixteenth, finding then in the Company of Jesus an admirable army of defence, which in theory and in fact made it victorious. Thenceforth everything lent it aid, quite as much the impotent attacks of its adversaries as the apologies of its advocates. It was an unequal struggle between the Council and the papacy.

One was intermittent, the other was always there. From the time that the power to convoke the Council and interpret its decisions was reposed in the Pope, he became its master. He had only to make effective that right of sovereign arbiter and supreme interpreter of the thought of the Church which the Council of Trent had recognised as his. The Roman curia was prudently careful not to bring forward before its hour the dogmatic question of infallibility. It left fact and habit to create law and dogma, and limited its own action to rigorous condemnation of those who still held the contrary doctrine, obliging them to recant or keep silent. Thus the world became accustomed to look upon Rome as the fountain of divine authority in the Church. Whoever refused to accept its decisions soon found himself cut off from Catholic communion. In 1854 Pius IX made the first trial of his power. He consulted the bishops without calling them together for deliberation, and then, upon his own pontifical authority, added a new dogma, that of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, to the *Credo* of the Church. Protestations were vigorous, but few and impotent. The time was ripe. He who exercised such a power should possess it by law. It was possible and it had become necessary to give final definition to this sovereign

[1] Appendix VI.

authority, and secure its recognition by the entire Church. The proclamation of the dogma in an Ecumenical Council would be the solemn abdication of the rights and powers of Councils into the hands of the papacy. For this purpose the Vatican Council was convoked in 1870, whence was promulgated the dogma of the personal infallibility of the Pope.

The infallible authority of the Council infallibly created the infallible authority of the Pope, and by that act died. There could not be two infallibilities in the Church. In questions of faith and morals, the Pope has sovereign authority apart from the Council. The Council apart from the Pope would have no authority. Appeal to the Council, so frequent in past centuries, has become an absurdity. To convoke it would be a useless luxury.

The decree concerning the infallibility of the Pope was voted on July 18, 1870, with unanimity of all members of the Council present, save two. The other opposing members had preferred to absent themselves from Rome. The following is the definitive formula:

"Conformably to the tradition faithfully followed since the beginning of the Christian faith, with the approbation of the holy Council, we teach and define this as *divinely revealed dogma:*

"The Roman Pontiff, when speaking *ex cathedra*—that is, when performing the office of Pastor and Doctor of all Christians he defines, in virtue of his superior apostolic authority, a point of doctrine touching faith and morals, obligatory for the entire Church—the Roman Pontiff, thanks to the divine assistance which was promised to him in the person of the Most Blessed Peter, enjoys that infallible authority with which the divine Redeemer endowed his Church, when the question arises of defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. The definitions of the Roman Pontiff are then unchangeable in themselves, and are not rendered such by the consent of the Church. If anyone—which God forbid!—is presumptuous enough to contradict our definition, let him be anathema."

Side by side with this decree we may place the parallel decree of the same Council upon the jurisdiction of the Pope:

"The Roman Pontiff has not only the office of inspection and direction, but also full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal Church, not only in things which concern faith and morals, but also in those which concern the discipline and government of the Church in the whole universe. Not only does he possess the highest parts of this power, but he has it in all its plenitude. And this his power is ordinary and immediate, as much over all the Churches in general, and each Church in particular, as over each Pastor and all the faithful of whatever rite or dignity they may be. If anyone denies it, let him be anathema!"

From the comparison of these two texts emerges with perfect clearness the mind of the Vatican Council. The first defines the dogmatic authority of the supreme Doctor of the Church; the second explains the absolute sovereignty of the pastor. One cannot doubt the decisions of the one without falling into heresy, nor, without falling into revolt, refuse the obedience always due to the other. It will not suffice to adhere to the definitions of the commandments which the Apostolic See has given in the past, one must also be ready to accept everything which it may advise or decide in the future. Thus recently decreed Pius IX and Leo XIII. . . . "In the difficult course of events, Catholic believers, if they will give heed to us as they are bound to do, will see what are the duties of each, as much in the opinions which they ought to hold as in the things which they ought to do. In the matter of thinking, it is necessary for them to embrace and firmly hold all that the Roman Pontiffs have transmitted to them, or shall yet transmit, and to make public profession of them as often as circumstances make necessary. Especially and particularly in what is called 'modern liberties,' they must abide by the judgment of the Apostolic See, and each believer is bound to believe thereupon what the Holy See itself thinks."[1]

[1] Appendix VII.

II

The Meaning of the Dogma

It would seem difficult to dispute the meaning or the bearing of a dogma formulated with such juridical precision. Nothing that concerns the life of the Christian or of the Church is foreign to it. This being so, of what use can it be to discuss at length, as has been done, the words *ex cathedra,* or other conditions of pontifical infallibility? Whether the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* or not—that is, in his capacity as universal Doctor, or universal Pastor—is a point never left to the judgment of the individual mind. So soon as a Catholic believer experiences a doubt upon the subject it is his first and sacred duty not to draw from that fact a pretext for non-obedience, but to refer the question to the Roman See itself, which here, as in all other cases, remains sole and sovereign judge. No opposition of any sort can find a legitimate basis in the formula of the dogma. To be sure, upon points indifferent to their authority, the Popes may permit, and in fact they do permit, in Church or school, a certain degree of liberty. But it is not a liberty founded in right, I mean in the dignity of the spirit or of the conscience. It never exists except upon those points and within those limits where it pleases the Roman See to tolerate it.

Being no longer able to dispute the absolute character of the dogma, liberal Catholics endeavour to annul it by reducing it to a pure symbol. According to them, the person of the Pope speaking *ex cathedra* can have only a representative value. The proclamation of his infallibility can have changed nothing in the Church. The pontifical voice would never be anything other than the echo of the voice of Catholic Christianity. In the latter essentially resides infallible inspiration. The Pope is the exterior hour hand which marks the time on the dial plate of the Church, which, in reality, is itself moved by more hidden springs, by the profound and mysterious movements which come to life and succeed one another in the general consciousness of the entire body. The Church

obeys the Pope only in appearance. It is the Pope who, in reality, obeys the Soul of the Church.

Thus is the identification of the Pope and the Church posited at the same time by liberals and ultramontanes. The former use it to annul the Pope, the latter to annul the Church.

The truth of the dogma is with the latter. To make it evident to all eyes they have only to recall this clause of the decree: *Pontificis romani definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiæ irreformabiles.* Whence it appears that the infallibility of the Pope is entirely personal, independent and absolute. This separation of the Pope and the Church, of the head and the body, is indeed the greatest innovation of the Council of the Vatican, and without doubt the most dangerous. By it the Council broke with the ancient tradition and opened a new era in the historic evolution of Catholicism.

Let us here establish against all subterfuges the integrity of a dogma which timid consciences can bring themselves neither to reject nor fully to accept. The Pope depends only upon God. From God he immediately draws his enlightenment, his graces, and his powers, which with divine authority he afterwards transmits to the bishops and through them to the entire Church. To seek to overthrow the order of this hierarchy, to make the life and faith of the Church depend upon the Holy Spirit by direct means and immediate communication, in such sort that the inspiration of the Pope would be only a derived inspiration, would be to destroy the new dogma, root and branch. The Holy Spirit is not in the Pope because he is first in the Church, an invisible and immanent power; he is in the Church only by the intermediary and the visible presence of the Pope.[1]

As grace inheres in the visible matter of the sacrament, so the gift of the Spirit inheres in the person of the Sovereign Pontiff. His personal infallibility, which comes historically as the cornice of the edifice, becomes dogmatically its foundation. One is in communion with

[1] Pezzani, "Codex S. Ecclesiæ romanæ," 1893, Canon 35, p. 96.

the Church only as he remains in communion with the Pope. If by any possibility the entire body of the Church, that is to say, the totality of bishops, priests, and people, should separate themselves from the Pope and reject his definitions and his decrees, it would not be that the Pope was in error, but that the Church herself had departed from the truth.

Furthermore, the Roman canonists, with invincible logic, have deduced all the practical consequences which flow from the formula of the dogma. No issue is left open to those who would escape them. The following, with and under authority of the Pope, is taught in the course of canon law in the Roman University:

"To the Roman pontiff are due from all Catholics honour and obedience, even when—which God forbid—the Pope is a bad man." [1]

It is an error to assert that the power of the Pope may be limited by the canons of ecclesiastical law, by the customs or institutions of the Church; the Pope is above the canon law. As to natural or divine law, doubtless the Pope cannot be freed from it, but he remains its supreme and infallible interpreter, so that, as a matter of fact, one can never be in the right in setting them up against him. Equally it would be idle or even ridiculous to oppose to him the Holy Scriptures or Catholic tradition, since he alone holds the key to both, that is, their authentic and legitimate interpretation.[2]

The Roman Pontiff has full authority over all Councils, even Ecumenical.

When he makes a Concordat with the head of a potential State, this Concordat is not the least in the world synallagmatic and equal in its two parts. The prince is bound to conform himself to it, because it is his Christian duty to obey the Holy See. But the Pope, in accepting the Concordat, makes a purely gracious concession, always revocable

[1] *Ib.*, Can. 29.

[2] *Ib.*, Can. 33. The Pope has the right, if he please, to designate his successor (Can. 48).

whenever such a concession may turn to the detriment of the Church, or when it simply ceases to be of any utility to the Church.[1]

Even in the matter of opinions which concern neither dogma nor morals, it is of strict obligation to receive and to profess, the case occurring, all past, present, and future instructions and directions of the sovereign Pontiffs. And it is not enough to yield them external obedience in silence and respect. The only worthy and religious obedience is inward, the obedience of the heart.[2]

So soon as faith becomes nothing other than submission to an external authority, theology is necessarily reduced to be the mere redaction of a code of canon law. Is a discussion raised in the Church, the contesting powers soon cease to argue, and seek to evoke a decision of the Roman court, which shall crush the adversary and put an end to the dispute. Religious truth is then not a matter of knowledge or of reason, but of politics and diplomacy.

In the Roman system it becomes thenceforth impossible to find the slightest basis for a constitutional opposition to the sovereignty of the Pope. The government of the Pope, being the government of God, is necessarily absolute. Theocracy is the foundation of the dogma of the Vatican.[3]

If the utterance of the Pope is the source of truth, of law, of the salvation of individuals and of peoples, if his prescriptions ought to be law by the mere fact that they come bearing his seal, it is evident that no human sentiment, no demonstration of fact, no cry of conscience, no claim of humanity or of patriotism would have a feather's weight against the least important decretal.

The dogma of the infallibility of the Pope is something entirely different from a theological theory. The deified papacy is an actual government, with its organs, its functionaries, its court, its magistrates.

[1] *Ib.*, Can. 34 and Commentary.
[2] *Ib.*, Can. 29, p. 81; Pius IX, Constitutio *Quanta cura*, 1864.
[3] *Ib.*, Can. 40, 49.

At the same time, the Roman curia is raised above the political order and the supernatural and divine order, to serve as the organ of the most limitless power which the world has ever known.

It is very remarkable that the same year which saw the spiritual power of the Popes raised to its climax saw the end of their temporal power. In fact, since the sixteenth century a continual movement toward emancipation had been enfranchising the politics, science, education, and civil life of modern states from the effective tutelage of the Church. In the temporal order the claims of the Roman theocracy have become almost inoffensive, thanks to the material impotence of the Pope. None the less do they persist as a moral and metaphysical authority whose sphere of action is of immense range. In this quality they are open to discussion, and discussion is precisely their gravest danger. They can neither refuse nor maintain it. An authority which discusses ceases to be absolute, since by the mere fact of discussing and advancing arguments it recognises the supremacy of the tribunal of reason.

Such is the contradiction to which the Vatican dogma has reduced Catholic theology. It cannot undertake to prove the dogma without by that very act destroying it.

III

The Root of the Dogma and Its Constituent Elements

Considered by itself, the dogma of the infallibility of a single man, to whom all others are obliged in conscience to submit the direction of their religious thought and the conduct of their moral life, remains incomprehensible and intolerable, a defiance of common sense. But the Roman Catholic dogma is very easily accounted for from the historic point of view, if it be studied in its profound connection with the earlier evolution of the Church. It is its logical conclusion and fulfilment.

The new dogma has its roots in the Catholic conception of the Church

itself. It grows therefrom as the plant grows from the seed sown in the ground. The infallibility of the Pope is simply the last expression and perfected form of the infallibility of the Church. What would an abstract infallibility be, which had not an organ infallible like itself, by which to exercise itself and rule in the world of facts?

The infallibility of the Pope is derived in law and in fact from the infallibility of the Church.

In law, the thesis is clear; one syllogism suffices to establish it. If the Council is infallible the Pope is infallible too, for the Council has so declared him. If the Pope is not infallible, neither is the Ecumenical Council, and in this case the authority of the Council is destroyed and the entire system of Catholic authority falls to pieces.

Thus it becomes clear how the new dogma, impossible as it seemed to be, so easily triumphed over its opponents. The opposition encountered at the Vatican and in the Church was vain, because it was without principle or basis. Nothing was left for the Gallicans and liberal Catholics but arguments of procedure. They attacked vices of form in the convocations or in the deliberations and notes of the Council, feeble weapons which fell from their trembling hands so soon as the Council itself had declared its proceedings regular. Then those opposing were reduced to the alternative of unconditional submission or persistent holding to their individual opinion, the principle of Protestantism and of all heresy. It is to-day logically impossible to believe in the infallibility of the Church without believing in that of its head, for the first has no other real expression except the second.

Facts speak more loudly than the law, and history more cogently than logic.

From having been, in the apostolic times, a pure democracy, the Church became a great federation governed by its bishops; it was an aristocratic system. Later the primacy of the Bishop of Rome made of it a monarchy, at first tempered by Councils, then more and more centralised, omnipotent, and finally absolute. The same political necessity

which had raised the second-century bishop above the Council of Elders, and made him the symbol and representative of the unity of the local church, elevated the Bishop of Rome above the other bishops and made him the personification and head of the entire Catholic body. The person of the Supreme Pontiff should therefore not be considered as in itself an ordinary and empirical individuality; he is essentially representative and symbolic, like the person of the priest at the altar or in the confessional, like the substance apparent in the sacrament. In him a mystery takes place at the moment when he seats himself upon the Chair of Peter. He is the concentration of the whole Church, as the Church in its turn, in its entire hierarchy and extent, is merely the development in time and space of that which is first of all in the very person of her chief.

The Pope is the sun of which bishops and priests are the rays to carry the light and life to the very extremities of the body of the Church. From thenceforth the bishops could not test the prerogative of the papacy without destroying their own by the same stroke.

Thus the dogma of the personal infallibility of the Pope is implanted by all its rootlets in the more general dogma of the infallibility of the Church. It is its necessary and final form. Without doubt, this form annuls and supplants all preceding forms of authority, bishops or Councils, and in this sense it is true that it operated a great change and even a revolution in the Church. But this revolution came about in the same manner as those preceding, and succeeded by virtue of the same logic and for the same reasons. The principle remains the same under the changing variety of its manifestations, and the principle resides in this, that the infallibility of the Church can be apparent and active only by quitting the abstract sphere and becoming, so to speak, incarnate in a visible organ, priest, Council or Pope.[1]

[1] *Vide* Scherer, "Etudes sur la litt. contemporaine," v. pp. 341-361, "la Papauté, l'Eglise et la société moderne"; Thomassin, "Ancienne et nouvelle discipline de l'Eglise," 1678-79, and "Dissertations sur les conciles"; Bossuet, "Sermon sur l'unité de l'Eglise et la déclaration de 1682"; P. Gratry, "Lettres sur le Pape Hono-

The notion of the Church, in its turn, resolves into two elements. It is constituted of a doctrinal element, that is, the tradition which guards the supernatural deposit of divine truth, and which must at the same time justify the rights which the Church arrogates to herself and the absolute submission to her mysteries and precepts which she demands from everyone. The other element, the organ of action and administration in the Church, is the Episcopate, without which doctrinal tradition would remain uncertain and vacillating, like every human tradition. Constituted in its essence by the theory of the apostolic succession, the Episcopate is a living chain across the centuries, parallel to that of the doctrinal tradition, an unbroken link of the Church of the present to its supernatural origins, that is, to the apostles, to Christ, and to God.

Church, tradition, supernatural priesthood, episcopate, papacy, such, in the order of their historical genealogy, are the constituent elements of the Catholic dogma of authority. It is possible to understand the latter clearly, and judge it with all impartiality, only by tracing back its long genesis. We shall see the divers factors of which it is the fruit successively developing in history from their most distant origins to their latest consequences, beginning with that very notion of the Church which is earliest in date and which has engendered all the others.

rius," 1870; Lord Acton, "History of the Vatican Councils," 1871; A. Harnack, "Dogmengeschichte," 1890, iii. p. 565-653; Joseph de Maistre, "Du pape"; "Acta et Decreta Concilii Vaticani," 1891 (Collectio Lacensis vii.).

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHURCH

I

The Catholic Notion of the Church

THE idea of the Church is not only the keystone of the Roman Catholic system, it is Roman Catholicism itself; in it the entire system is condensed and summed up.

The property of the Catholic conception is to present religion itself as a supernatural institution; a sacerdotal and hierarchical institution; that is, a visible and permanent corporation, charged by God himself to teach men what they ought to believe and do, and to save them. The Church is the ark of the new covenant which Jesus Christ, the new Noah, built with his own hands, and confided to an elect crew to rescue the lost and wanderers of earth and carry them safely to the shores of eternity.[1]

In this dogma of the Church, the real and the ideal, the human and the divine, are not only reconciled, but identified and made inseparable. The Church is the historic and visible incarnation of saving truth, and of the redemptive work of God. To speak of an invisible church becomes a futility; it is to say that the incarnation has not taken place.

The most profound and authoritative Catholic theologians of to-day love to insist upon the likeness and parallel between the incarnation of divinity in the person of the Christ and the incarnation of religion itself in the body of the Church. The second is represented as the consequence of the first, which thus perpetuates itself through the centuries. The divine Word had need of a visible organ and a human

[1] Tertullian.

medium in order to communicate himself to men. Like the Christ, the visible Church is therefore conceived and organised by the Holy Spirit in the bosom of humanity. It is still the Word *made flesh;* it is the very Son of God continuing, after his resurrection, to appear among men in a human form which perpetually renews and rejuvenates itself. Like the person of Christ, the Church is at once human and divine. In the Church the two notions communicate and interpenetrate in the unity of a supernatural life and activity. The divine element is the soul of the Church, which vivifies and leaves its imprint upon the entire body, that is, the human mass which by itself is inert and passive.

From this point of view nothing is more logical or becomes more natural than the dogma of the infallibility of the Church, or the current axiom that outside the Church there is no salvation. If the Church is nothing other than the institution of salvation, created by God to rescue men from death and damnation, they being all necessarily condemned by original sin, it is very clear that outside of her none can be saved. And on the other hand, if the Church is divine truth incarnate, how can she err? To accuse the Church of error is to accuse God himself of mistake or deception; it is to say that the truth is not the truth.[1]

There are two definitions of the Catholic Church, one general and one restricted.

In the general sense, the Church is the visible society of all who profess its faith and partake in its sacraments, in the obedience due to its legitimate pastors and to the Roman Catholic Pontiff. But considered in its inward essence and in the restricted sense of the word, the Church is, above all things, the sacerdotal and hierarchical order divinely established, the direct heir of the rights and privileges of the apostles. Was it not, indeed, the apostles to whom the promises were made, upon whom powers were conferred, to whom the mission of teaching men and making

[1] J. A. Moehler, "Symbolik oder Darstellung der Dogm.," chapter on the Church; Perrone, "Théol. dogm. Traité des lieux théolog."

them holy was confided, as is the proper task and end of the Church? There are, then, actually two Churches in the Church; the one teaching and governing, the other taught and governed; one active, the other passive. It is the essential distinction between cleric and layman.[1]

There is this difference between the Catholic and the Protestant conceptions of the Church, that according to the latter inward virtues, such as the sincerity of faith and the reality of conversion, are required in order to become members of the true Church of Christ, while Catholic theologians simply require external marks, like the profession of the true faith and participation in the sacraments, which are of a nature to be apprehended by the senses. The reason for this is simple: if inward virtues are required, they being invisible and always uncertain, it is impossible to know who are the true members of the Church, nor, consequently, where is the true Church. We necessarily reach the distinction made by heretics between the visible Church, which may be false and faithless, and the true Church, which would be invisible. As it is above all things important that there should be neither doubt nor uncertainty as to the place in which, and the persons in whom, the true Church resides, it is of the highest necessity to require, for their recognition, nothing invisible or occult, and consequently nothing purely spiritual and moral.

"The Church," says Bellarmin, "is an organised social body as visible and palpable as the Roman people, the Republic of Venice, or the Kingdom of France." It is a true state, to which one belongs, as to any other, by an external and legal tie.

The Church, like every political state, includes two sorts of members, the good and the evil, docile subjects and those rebellious or impious.[2] Here, as elsewhere, it belongs to the heads and possessors of legitimate authority to preserve the good and to subdue the evil by exhortations, laws, and chastisements.

As political states are recruited by birth, so the Church is recruited

[1] Perrone, *ib.*

[2] Roman Catechism, i. 10, 6.

by baptism. The act of baptism is the external proof that one legitimately belongs to it. A baptised person may be unbelieving or rebellious; he remains none the less the subject of the Church, and the Church has always the right to claim him.

This theory rests upon the initial fact of a supernatural institution. The Church is not the effect of the psychological and social law which decrees that every religion, since it contains an eminent social principle, shall create a religious society by its own expansion. No, the Church is a creation of God. How, without a miracle, should the first realisation of the Christian idea have been adequate to this principle? Founded upon an eternal decree, the Church instituted by Christ is to all its members pre-existent. It is a metaphysical entity descended from heaven in historic time, prepared for and prefigured in the Old Covenant, reigning sovereign in the New. Such is the doctrine of Cyprian, Augustine, Bossuet, and Leo XIII.

But the modern historian never presupposes a miracle. However imposing may be the destinies of the Church, or its still more lofty claims, its birth, its development, its triumphs, and its reverses are none the less a series of phenomena, interlinked and conditioned by the circumstances of time and place, like all other historic phenomena. If miracle is found neither in the circumstances nor the progress of this history, in which have met and mingled all the social forces of two thousand years, why should it have occurred in its beginning? Why should not the fortunes of the Rome of the Popes be naturally explicable by a concurrence of causes more numerous indeed, but not less discernible, than the fortunes of the Rome of the consuls and Cæsars?

All the great empires, all the great societies of former days, were equally attributed to divine origin. Historical criticism has always been able to trace, through the golden haze of legend, the ordinary course of human societies, everywhere marked by inevitable struggles and sorrows. The fables woven around the cradle of the papacy are of no greater historic value for being of another order than those which

surrounded that of Romulus with a divine nimbus. We can mark the date of their appearance in history. They go no farther back than the third century.

It was only after the Church had constituted herself an infallible oracle and an organised political power, that anyone dreamed of justifying in theory that which had triumphed in fact. From one end of the history of the Catholic Church to the other we can note this circumstance. Dogma never consecrates anything that has not already passed into practice for a century or two. The Episcopal power had long prevailed in the whole Church before Cyprian made it the dogmatic theory. The Immaculate Conception of Mary, the personal infallibility of the Pope, had already been long triumphant when Pius IX made dogmas of these beliefs. Let us then establish the true relations: it is not the dogmatic and supernatural theory of the Church which makes its strength, it is the strength and victory of the Church which leads to the theory. Therefore, the strength and the victory came from elsewhere and should be otherwise explained.

Having now been studied for nearly a century by the most impartial and rigorous historic method, the problem of the historic origin of the Roman Catholic Church and the theory which consecrates its claims has been illuminated by the brightest possible light. Deeply rooted in the Hebraic religion, germinating in the earliest Christian communities, developed and gradually prepared by a great variety of conflicts and a continuous succession of efforts, the Catholic notion of the Church first appears distinct and ready to be established in triumph only in the time of Irenæus, Clement, Tertullian, and especially of Cyprian. Passing from the second century to the third, the sensation is as if one passed from one world to another. A revolution has taken place. Behind the Catholic form of Christianity there are more ancient forms not difficult to discern, which remain like the landmarks of a road once followed, and until our own days almost forgotten.

II

The Messianic Kingdom and the Church

The original germ of the Catholic Church is the Messianic idea of the "Kingdom of God" or "of Heaven." It claims to be this very kingdom, the object of the hopes and prayers of the prophets and seers of Israel. And yet how different are the two conceptions! The Kingdom of Heaven, as its name indicates, was to come from heaven at the end of time. Men were expecting, at no long delay, the supreme catastrophe which should introduce the judgment of God, reward each man according to his works, put an end to the reign of the powers of evil, and inaugurate that of righteousness and peace.[1]

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed in his energetic and familiar figures of speech: "The axe is laid unto the root of the trees, therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." [2] Jesus intended nothing else when, taking up the same theme, he said: "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel." [3]

What relation is there between this apocalyptic and transcendent conception and the idea of a religious society politically organised, living in history side by side with terrestrial powers, having like them its chiefs, its laws, interests, diplomacy; treating with them or battling against them to maintain and extend its hard-won privileges and conquests? How, and by what succession of changes in facts and ideas, did the Jewish Messianic idea become the Catholic conception of the Church in the third century? These are the precise terms of the problem which the origins of Christianity set before the historian and the thinker.

[1] Daniel vii. 13, 14, and all Jewish and Christian apocalyptic.

[2] Matt. iii. 10.

[3] Mark i. 15. [The French translation is more vigorous: "Repent, for the measure of the time is full! The Kingdom of God is at the door; receive the good news in faith.—*Trans.*]

When we attribute to Jesus this Catholic conception of the Church, or simply the intention of founding something analagous to it, we fall into the most artless of anachronisms. Not only he did not will this Church; he could not even have foreseen it, for the good reason that he thought himself to have come in the last days of the world, and all this historic development of Christianity was outside of his Messianic horizon.

Since the appearance of the book of Daniel all pious souls in Israel had believed themselves to be living in the last period of history. The preaching of the Baptist had vivified this belief throughout all Palestine. Jesus assuredly shared it. The Kingdom of Heaven, for whose advent he undertook to prepare, because he expected it shortly to appear, was not a Church organised and established on earth, but the great revolution predicted by the prophets and described in the apocalypses, the striking manifestation of the righteousness and faithfulness of God. No doubt he knew neither the day nor the hour of this event, and, unlike the makers of apocalypses, he attempted no illusory calculations; but neither did he doubt that the catastrophe of the drama in which he was engaged was imminent. "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," he said; "its era has already risen in the hearts of men. This generation shall not pass away until the divine trump shall have sounded." [1] This being the case, what interest could he have in organising a social institution for a long future?

The apostles whom he commissioned were neither priests nor ecclesiastical functionaries; they were simple messengers, bearers of the good tidings of the Kingdom. They were not to have finished visiting the cities of Israel before the Son of Man should appear.[2] In the meantime, Jesus simply sought to group around himself the elect of God, obscure, scattered, and poor, to await with them the signal which the Father would give. Therefore he never had the idea of any other social bond than their attachment to his person, any other organisation

[1] Appendix VIII. [2] Matt. x. 23.

than their mutual good will, any other hierarchy than the reversed hierarchy of the greatest humility and the most self-forgetful love, most devoted to the welfare of others.[1]

Assuredly his work had the future for its own, and was bound to conquer the world, because he laid its groundwork in the deep and immutable foundation of the human conscience. The words of life which, under this temporary Messianic form, he implanted in souls could not but fructify in history in every possible way. But the perspective of centuries to come was closed to him. He walked by faith in the love and righteousness of the Father, and not by sight, and none may say that his faith was deceived. None the less does it remain a fact that no one would have been more astonished and scandalised than he, had he been able to foresee all that men bearing his name, and making use of his authority, were to present to the world as his work or his thought.[2]

In the direction of the future the horizon was still less open to the gaze of the apostles and the first generation of Christians. Persuaded that the Messiah had come, they could not imagine that the world would last long. Without a single exception they awaited from day to day the triumphant return of their Master upon the clouds of heaven. The whole Apocalypse of St. John is built upon this hope. Paul was no exception. Almost to the close of his career he believed that he should see before death this glorious revolution and the resurrection of the dead. Such an absorbing vision filled the believers with ardent enthusiasm, detached them from the earth, took away all anxiety for the future. They lived in a fever of exaltation. The necessities of common life, like its laws, seemed to them abolished.[3]

The picture of the first Christian community of Corinth which we find in the letters of Paul, not less than that of the Christians of Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles, give an exact idea of this first period of individual inspiration and free expression. The elect lived in the age as not belonging to it. They considered themselves as strangers

[1] Matt. xxiii. 8-12; Mark, x. 42-45. [2] Appendix IX. [3] Appendix X.

and travellers, who pass along without thinking of any enduring establishment. The individual gifts (charisms) apportioned by the Spirit to divers members of the community met all needs. The Spirit, acting in each believer, thus determined vocations, and portioned out to one and another, according to the faculties or the zeal of each, ministries and offices which appear to have been provisional.[1]

But with the passage of time things were certain to change. These embryos of organisms, spontaneously opening to the light in divers forms, could not but determine and assert themselves. The charism of the Spirit was destined soon to become a permanent ecclesiastical function. Above or side by side with the apostles, prophets, and teachers who held their vocation directly from God alone, and who were essentially itinerants, each community naturally drew from its own body its settled ministers, *elders, bishops, and deacons* charged with the general interests of the community, with the maintenance of discipline and the distribution of alms. Thus came into being and grew up side by side with the free and nomad apostolate a settled ecclesiastical functionality, which was destined little by little to replace and absorb it. The progress of this absorption marks the progress of the Catholic conception of the Church, and this became perfected when, in virtue of the theory of apostolic succession, divine inspiration and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were held to be absolutely coincident.[2]

The first Christian communities, composed at first of members equal among themselves and distinguished solely by varieties in the gifts of the Spirit, became in time organised bodies, veritable churches, which at first developed and took on different physiognomies according to the diversities of their geographical and social surroundings. In Palestine and beyond the Jordan the Christian community was modelled upon the Jewish synagogue, and apparently bore the same Aramæan name. In

[1] 1 Cor. xii., xiv.; Rom. xii. 3-9.

[2] This evolution, which appears as accomplished in the epistles called "Pastoral" and in the Epistles of Ignatius, was not yet universal in the time of the "Teaching of the Apostles." See "Teaching of the Apostles," xii., xiii., xiv., xv.

the Occident it appears to have reproduced the form of pagan colleges or associations, so numerous in Greek cities at that epoch.

In all this there is neither divine institution nor miracle of any sort, but simply the play and effect of general laws which rule social phenomena of this order. It may all be luminously explained in each region of the empire by the action of natural causes which come under the historian's observation.

Yet the evolution of every organism is governed by a directing idea, which is as its perfect latent soul. This idea is no more wanting here than elsewhere. It appears in the very earliest beginning.

The Christian communities scattered through the empire entertained frequent relations with one another; they received the visits and teachings of the same gospel messengers, or date back to the same apostles. All the communities founded by Paul, for example, had very close family ties. They were the children of the same father. It is therefore natural that they should have had from the beginning a very vivid consciousness of their spiritual unity, and that above the particular and local churches should have appeared, precisely as in the letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles, the idea of *The Church of God* or *of Christ, one and universal.* The principle of unity was found in this, that Christians who are united to Christ live by the same moral life, and are conscious of being in the same religious relation to God, and animated by the same spirit and the same hope of the eternal life upon which they are to enter. The Apostle Paul therefore conceives of the Church of the saints and the elect as an organ of the Christ, his very body, in which the Christ, who is its head, manifests all the virtues of his spirit and sheds forth the plenitude of his divine riches. Unity, inward harmony, the communion of saints; here already is distinctly set forth the essential character of the Church of Christ. But this unity, in which all natural and social diversities or oppositions are effaced, is not conceived as an exterior and visible unity; it is not founded upon unity of government, upon rites or even upon dogmas; it is entirely moral, and

is born of the communion of the Spirit; it is practically realised and maintained by mutual love. Again, the Church is represented as the pure and holy bride of the Messiah; she awaits her spouse, and prepares herself to go forth to meet him when he shall descend from heaven upon the clouds, to inaugurate the reign of God. This Paulinian notion of the Church of Christ, like all the Apostle's theology, is essentially idealist and transcendent. Amidst the sorrows and struggles of the present age, it is the grouping of the holy and elect; it is the forming of the true people Israel, heir of the ancient promises, who are to appear and hold themselves in prayer and watchfulness during the short interval of time which separates the present from the approaching hour when their King shall come.[1]

None the less we must recognise here the great idea which was to preside over the evolution of the Christian communities and lead through them to the constitution of the Catholic Church. Every religious and moral idea tends to translate itself to those outside, and to realise itself, in facts. The ideal unity of the Church would tend to become a visible reality by unity of government, worship, and discipline. Just as individual believers felt the imperious desire of grouping themselves, and uniting with one another, so the various sections of Apostolic Christianity, very diverse in origin, local churches dispersed throughout the empire, desired to draw near one another, to affirm their solidarity by an even closer federation and subordination which constantly became more clearly defined.[2]

Two necessary conditions were still lacking. It was essential first that apostolic Christianity should find a fixed centre around which individual churches might be grouped. Next it was necessary that they should come to the point of developing from within themselves a dogmatic rule and a principle of authority which would permit this centre to subdue all heresies and oppositions. In the very beginning of the century the future centre of the Catholic Church became apparent, and episcopal authority was constituted.

[1] Appendix XI. [2] Appendix XII.

III

The Græco-Roman Basis of the Catholic Church

In the very beginning two events occurred to determine the course of the history of Christianity: the great success of the Paulinian missions in the territories of the empire, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation in the year 70. By this event the centre of gravity of infant Christianity was forever displaced. From the Orient it passed to the Occident, and from Jerusalem to Rome. The primitive Judæo-Christian group declined, the pagano-Christian ever more and more gained the ascendant.

The first representatives of these two groups were Paul of Tarsus and James, the brother of Jesus. Far from being superior to them in authority, Peter appears relatively effaced between these two champions of contrary tendencies, which at that time were rival forces in the churches. James was not an apostle; he was something better, he was the brother of Christ, and succeeded him by a sort of hereditary right, founded on kinship in blood and Davidic descent. Until his death he was the true lieutenant, the first vicar of the Messiah, to whom Peter and the others were subordinated. If Palestinian Christianity had lived and extended itself toward the Orient, it would have formed and transmitted, coming from this source, a sort of Christian caliphate of another nature from that which was later established in Rome.[1]

James, surnamed the Rampart of his people, represented the past—Jewish particularism, ritual piety. Paul represented the moral principle of the gospel of Jesus, the religion of inward faith and of liberty. The future could not long remain uncertain. The tragic events of the year 70, which gave a fatal blow to the dreams of Jewish Messianism, put Paul in the right and consecrated the results of his work.

The struggle had been intense. The letters of Paul to the Christians of Galatia, Corinth, and Rome were its fruit and remain its monument.

[1] Appendix XIII.

When Paul returned from his distant journeys he had much difficulty in winning from Jerusalem the acceptance of these new children which were not her issue, and whose growing numbers gave the Christian Jews more fear and embarrassment than pleasure. The partisans of James had only one anxiety, to maintain the national privileges of the older brothers, the People Israel according to the flesh; while the Apostle to the Gentiles, overthrowing all literal arguments, proved the invincible incredulity of the mass of Jewish people, and hailed in these new Gentile communities the Israel according to the spirit, and the true inheritors of the promises made to Abraham.[1] Paul was stigmatised as a false apostle, an apostate, an enemy of Christ, a propagator of iniquity. His reply to his adversaries was in no gentle tone. Reading with enlightened eyes his letter to the Galatians and the second to the Corinthians, especially his visit to the apostles, pillars of Jerusalem, and his quarrel with Peter at Antioch, it is easy to see what anachronisms they commit, and with what fictions they lull themselves, who represent these first Christian communities as organised in the form of the Catholic Church, under the official rule of St. Peter.[2] None the less does this crisis mark the first step along a new way. A venturesome pilot had cut the cables which still held the vessel to the native shore, and had turned its prow to the open waters of Greek and Roman civilisation.

It has been observed that Paul appears to have proceeded methodically to the conquest of the empire; he had gone over it, province by province, in such manner that the political divisions virtually became ecclesiastical circumscriptions: Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, Gaul, Spain. The new Christianity was flowing into the imperial organism as into a mould, whose ideal of unity and hierarchical forms would survive in the Church, even when the political shell should have fallen to pieces under the hammer of the barbarians.

[1] Acts xxi. 18ff.; Gal. iii., iv., especially the allegory of Sarai and Hagar, 1. Cor. x. 1-10; Rom. iv., etc.

[2] Appendix XIV.

At the close of the great apostle's life, and on the eve of the catastrophe of the Jewish war, the equilibrium between the Jewish and pagan elements in Christianity had been definitely destroyed. The Jewish people, having continued in unbelief, seemed condemned by a decree of divine justice. Taking refuge beyond the Jordan, the fragments of the first Jewish Christian communities vegetated, with no contact with the mass of Christianity, and remaining unprogressive while all around them was in process of modification, they were to end by appearing as a heretic sect under their old name of Nazarenes. As a matter of fact, faithful to the spirit and tradition of James and other members of the family of Jesus, they alone represented primitive orthodoxy. But thus go the things of the world. Orthodoxy is always the doctrine officially consecrated by success.

Recruited especially in that world of proselytes which gravitated to the synagogues, the Gentile-Christian body, which was called the "great Church," followed a middle path between the theology of Paul, which they were incapable of comprehending, and the pretensions and rites of the Judaisers, which they could not tolerate. Thus was formed a sort of elementary and neutral doctrine, half Greek rational wisdom and half Israelitish tradition. Such was the theology of the writers of the transition period, who succeeded the apostles and are called the Apostolic Fathers. It was the substructure of Catholic orthodoxy.

In the eyes of Jesus, of Paul and the other apostles, the Old Testament had the absolute character of a divine revelation. It was also the first and for a long time the only written authority. But while it was venerated by them as much as by the Jews, it was necessarily coming to be otherwise interpreted. How make the partition between that which was conformable to the gospel and that which was contrary to it, between the ceremonial part actually abolished and the persistent moral part! The allegorical exegesis taught by Philo and already practised by Paul came to the aid of the liberty of faith. Of the Old Testament they retained these three things: faith in one God, creator of heaven and

earth, the moral law of the Decalogue, and the Messianic prophecies by which they proved that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. The rest was interpreted symbolically, as figures of the new priesthood, which, under cover of this venerable authority, was already being installed in the churches of the second century.[1]

Jerusalem being destroyed, this Græco-Roman Christianity sought a new centre around which to group itself; it had not long to hesitate. The great churches of Antioch, Ephesus, and Alexandria found a sort of equilibrium, and exercised authority only over the communities of their several regions. One city alone was lifted above all the others and enjoyed universal importance. Rome was always the eternal and the sacred city. Twice she was to inherit the succession of the world. The capital of the empire was marked in advance to become the capital of Christianity. There was no miracle in this; it was a fact of the social order, which so well answered to the historic conditions of the time that the real miracle would have been if it had turned out otherwise.

In the formation of the Catholic Church the action of the Roman genius was decisive. It first manifested itself toward the close of the first century; and from this moment it never ceased to be potent. In the new function it was faithful to its old spirit. It left to others the charge and the glory of being active in philosophic science or by the ardour of faith. Alexandria might be more learned, Ephesus more mystical. Its lot was administration, the maintenance of the rule, the inclination for, and the spirit of, government. In the name of the practical interest of unity and good order it intervened everywhere between the spontaneity of liberty and individual inspiration. It gave no orders as yet, simply fraternal counsels, but the counsels naturally had all the weight which could be given by the prestige of Rome, the strength and the wealth of its community, and the double legend of St. Peter's chair and his martyrdom.

All this is shown in the letter which the Church of Rome addressed to that of Corinth in the last period of Domitian's reign. The letter

[1] Appendix XV.

is collective and anonymous. At the time there was still no more a single bishop at Rome than at Corinth. The Roman community says nothing in the name of an official primacy or supremacy which it does not possess, but speaks in the name of the fraternal solidarity which permitted no one of the churches of the time to remain indifferent to the troubles and sorrows of the others, especially when they solicited help or counsel. But it is none the less true that the Roman genius makes itself seen, even in this first tentative.

A part of the Corinthian Church, the younger and the more volatile, had uprisen against the "elders," who had long been in charge, and had even deposed some of them. Rome, without hesitation, took sides against the revolutionists and in favour of the representatives of established authority, for the tradition of ecclesiastical power, for the subordination of the simple believer to the heads who are the true priests of God, Levites, and sacrificers of the new covenant. The unity necessary to realise in the Church is that of the empire, and more practically that which by the hierarchy and lay discipline reigns in the Roman army, the political and military ideal from which Rome thenceforth never departed.[1]

The Old Testament offered examples and figures which easily became rules. The Levitical ceremonial, abolished in the substance of its rites, had sacred forms which persisted in the imagination as divine types upon which Christian worship ought to be modelled. Christians continued to conceive of their worship as a sacrifice, their prayers and the Eucharist as offerings, and the communion table as an altar.[2] Thus was born unto Christianity the idea of a new priesthood instituted by God himself, to instruct, sanctify, and save mankind. The oversight of so high a mission called for an equal power. Little by little arose the image of a new theocracy, destined to replace the Mosaic theocracy, and to be

[1] Clement of Rome, 1. Cor. 40, where for the first time appears the word "laic," as opposed to "priest," 44 : 37 n.

[2] *Ib.*, 36, 40; 42; Epist. to Heb. x., xvii., 10, etc.

extended over the whole earth. This germ of theocracy is thus found from its very origin inherent in the very idea of the Church. It was to go on developing, and end by subordinating all the rest to itself.

About this time appeared for the first time the name *Catholic Church,* which was destined to so great a fortune. It was not yet a general expression, designating "the great church," the whole community of believers, in opposition to the sects, heresies, particular schools which were multiplying on all sides.[1] To make a strongly organised society out of this ill-defined mass, two elements were still necessary; a single, strong rule of faith, given and everywhere accepted as the expression of the apostolic tradition, and an episcopal government, sufficiently well established and sufficiently powerful to reduce the whole to unity and obedience. The double crisis of Gnosticism and Montanism which broke forth between 130 and 150 A. D., and lasted nearly a century, furnished both.

IV

The Church and Heresies

History goes on without repeating itself. There are many essential differences between the intestine conflicts which agitated the Church in the times of James and Paul, and those which, a century later, were stirred up by the Gnostic doctors and the prophets of Montanism. Nevertheless, the latter are the successors and logical development of the former. The curious antithesis formed by Gnosticism and Montanism represents in like fashion the Scylla and Charybdis between which the great Church must find a middle passage in order to become the Catholic Church.

Gnosticism has taken on many forms, engendered many sects and systems; nevertheless, it is easy to discover the fundamental essence and inspiration of them all. It was the speculative mind of Greece, warped by the influence of Alexandria and Asia Minor, struggling to discover

[1] Ignatius, "Ad Smyrn.," 8; "Martyr. Polycarpi," epigraph of the letter from Smyrna.

high truths behind the letter of ancient or popular myths, to transform faith into *gnosis* or knowledge, and positive religions into esoteric philosophy. The Gnostic doctors are the first theologian-philosophers of Christianity. They claimed to have the key of the mysteries of being, of life and of death. Their mysterious theosophy volatilised the very substance of ancient beliefs; it changed the narratives of the Bible or of the Gospels into symbols of metaphysical ideas, and the fact of redemption into a sort of cosmological drama, designed to explain and represent the origin and the end of evil, which are the origin and the end of being itself, the flux and reflux of things. The Gnostics called themselves and doubtless believed themselves Christians, but they were another sort of Christians than the multitude. They gave Jesus a notable place among the divine æons which they found under the figure of the popular divinities; they even gave to him a decisive part, the part of Saviour, in the liberation of the spirit held captive in the hands of matter, then to be restored to the divine pleroma. Christianity thus remained the supreme religion, but its value was no longer unique and exceptional; it had lost its moral originality, it entered into a vaster system as one part of it, as the final link in a chain of earlier revelations, as the symbolic expression of a higher and more comprehensive metaphysic; in short, it vanished in a general philosophy of cosmic evolution. In like fashion the old Lutheran orthodoxy was lost in the unanticipated exegesis and subtile dialectic of the Hegelian system.

If to this effort of Græco-Alexandrine speculation to resolve the historic substance of the Christian faith, we add the rites of initiation, the theurgic practices, the ceremonies and plastic representations by which all these gradually assimilated Christian ceremonial to the mysteries and the ceremonial of paganism, it is impossible to misapprehend the direction of the movement. It was the revenge of the Greek mind upon the apostolic preaching; it was the Hellenisation of Christianity and its absorption into the general philosophy of the time.

Such was the peril on the left hand of the still plastic Christianity

of the second century. On the right hand an opposite peril was not less threatening. What was the feverish agitation which disturbed first the churches of Asia Minor, extending with astonishing rapidity to Rome, to Gaul, to Africa, everywhere setting the most fervent members of the communities in opposition to the administrators who governed then? On one side we find prophets, martyrs, free preachers; on the other bishops, elders, church councils. The Montanism which first appeared on the volcanic soil of Phrygia was to the colourless Christianity of the second century the revival of the "prophetic spirit" of the first days, with its miraculous gifts, its moral austerity, and feverish expectation of the Messianic return of Christ in the clouds, and the destruction of the world in a final conflagration. Montanus inaugurated the last age of the world, the age of the Paraclete.

Second-century Christianity had not explicitly disowned the hopes or the apocalyptic speculations of the age preceding. But it no longer expected a near and violent catastrophe to resolve the difficulties against which it had daily to struggle. The Church was no longer "the company of the saints," it no longer considered itself a stranger and pilgrim here below. It had taken domicile and settled down upon the earth among all the other pioneers of the time. Such a change could not take place without requiring a certain accommodation to pervading customs and to the necessities of the time. In the act of expansion the body of the Church had become chilled. Its moral temperature had fallen several degrees. The piety of the greater number had become worldly, and tolerant to excess, morals had become relaxed. Then arose new prophets in the old spirit to denounce this tendency to worldliness in the Church of God. The outburst of Montanism about the year 140 or 150 was what in our days are those Anglo-Saxon revivals which, outside of the clergy and the official framework, from time to time arouse traditional Protestantism, too ready to slumber amid the comforts of the present world. In the disordered transports of Phrygian prophetism we find the last paroxysms of the ancient fever of Jewish Messianism.

The Montanists claimed that in them the gifts of the Spirit had revived; they predicted the near return of the Christ, and the last judgment; they consequently proposed to maintain, by a discipline to the last degree rigorous, a clean-cut separation and irreconcilable conflict between the "family of the saints" and a corrupt world condemned to imminent destruction. They represented the most living party in the Church, and this explains how, by nature volatile, the most pious Christians of the West, the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons, Tertullian of Carthage, should have shown themselves so favourable to a movement of revival and reformation which was to bring back the golden age of Christianity.

But the times had changed indeed. Already Christian ideas and customs had taken another course. The tentative of Montanus and his disciples was an anachronism. From the point of view of the Messianic hopes, it was the galvanisation of beliefs practically dead, and from the point of view of moral discipline, it was the resurrection of an ideal which must meet an invincible resistance in the stubborn and mingled mass of second-century Christianity.

When two great opposing forces meet, the resultant is motion in a middle direction. It was the same with the Christianity of the second century, hesitating and drawn in contrary directions by this conflict between Gnosticism and Montanism. If one was a return to the Greek spirit, the other was a revival of the Jewish spirit. The Christian body, with those who directed it, could neither absolutely repudiate both, since its life was drawn from their double substance, nor obey exclusively the impulse of one of the two. To live at all, it was forced to receive, and mingle in its own bosom, such elements as were capable of mingling and amalgamating, while rejecting such as seemed to be excessive and antagonistic.

It is difficult, but necessary, to picture to one's self the intellectual and moral spectacle offered by Christianity between the years 150 and 180, under the reigns of Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius. The most

diverse currents of thought and devotion came in contact and mingled in all possible ways. In the great polemics of the age the forms of the age to follow were decided. In the vat into which the whole vintage had been gathered a fermentation, an intense ebullition, was going on, the rapid decomposition of the old elements and the slow recomposition of a new system; it was the crucible whence emerged the Catholic theory of the Church. This theory so little came down ready-made from heaven by a supernatural road, that the battle of which it was the issue remained long uncertain. It is clear that this form of Christianity was the only one even possible in the face of dangerous heresies. Many different solutions were concurrently sketched out, according to locality, to respond to the conservative instinct of the Christian conscience. Alexandria, for example, triumphed over heresy by a learned exegesis of the sacred texts, and upon this exegesis constituted a form of Christianity which is not without analogy with Protestantism. What does the school of Pantænus, of Clement, and of Origen more closely resemble than a little Protestant university? The Churches of Asia Minor built up their tradition on another basis. They relied upon their customs, upon the sayings of the Elders and the Apostle John, to resist as well the objurgations of Rome as the assaults of the Gnostics and the diatribes of the Montanists. It was a sort of Anglicanism, or better perhaps, of Gallicism before the Council of Trent. At Antioch and in Syria the letters of Ignatius offer a mystical theory of the Episcopate which is essentially Oriental, and radically different from the Roman theory, which was destined to triumph.

But in this crisis, the outcome of which was to be a radical transformation of primitive Christianity, in this work of general salvation, it was Rome which, by its political importance as by its genius for government, was destined to take the direction, and impose upon the others the necessary solution. Alexandria was half Gnostic, and yielded to heresy while trying to refute it by a method of her own. Asia Minor, Gaul, Carthage, were in secret sympathy with Montanism. Rome clearly

saw the double peril; it faced both sides at once, defined the vacillating orthodoxy, and at the outset proposed practical solutions most apt to make it everywhere triumphant. The Catholic theory of the Church was a Roman work.

Without the least concern about philosophical logic or learned exegesis, treating religious questions like political matters, solely intent upon maintaining the visible unity of the body of the Church and eliminating from it all elements of dissidence and anarchy, she invented, or rather applied, in the religious and moral order, the juridic authority of prescription so well developed by Tertullian.

Instead of encouraging discussion with heretics, Rome suppressed it; providing for believers a way to oppose to all objections a *declinatory*, a sort of previous question, which did more than refute heresy, which executed it before it had opened its mouth.[1] This method was a confession of apostolic faith, a popular and universal symbol, which, becoming a law of the Church, excluded from its midst, without dispute, all those who refused to repeat it. It was the "Rule of Faith." The Church of Rome easily obtained it by adding a few clear and well-defined propositions to the formula of baptism recited by the neophytes in primitive times. This is how, against Gnostic dualism, she maintained the identity of the supreme God, creator of the world; and against Docetism, the reality of the body of Jesus, and of his sufferings and death. These are the origins of the symbol called, "Of the Apostles," the first and venerable monument of Catholic orthodoxy. It saw the light in its earliest form in the church of Rome, between the years 150 and 160, and as it offered a means of defence extremely easy and sure, it passed rapidly from the Roman church to the other churches.

The victory over Montanism was slower and more difficult, but it also had still more decisive practical consequences. In the end the

[1] Tertullian, the entire treatise "De Præscriptione Hæreticorum," especially chap. 20, 21. Thus is the question of truth decided for the Church. It is not by research into intellectual or moral proof, always uncertain, but by an exterior and legal criterion which makes all discussion useless.

bishops got the better of the prophets, and bent to their own disciplinary authority and oversight all inspirations and miraculous gifts, however striking they might appear to be. This was the capital point. From that time the bishops appeared as the highest organs of the Holy Spirit, whose action was directed into clearly defined channels, and confined within the hierarchy. The ecclesiastical order and the religious order became so closely identified that it would never again be possible to set one against the other, or to attempt to reform the Church in the name of the Spirit, since the Church judges, without appeal, of the truth or the properties of the Spirit.

By the same act, the conceptions of the Catholic Church, and of the Kingdom of God, which in the beginning were a whole heaven apart, were blended and identified.[1] The apocalyptic hope lost its object. The reign of God was to come in the triumphs and progressive conquests of the Church over the world. Thenceforth the attributes of the one passed over to the other. The visible body of the Church clothed itself in the ideal perfections of the kingdom of God; holiness, unity, catholicity, infallibility, eternity. That which in the faith of Jesus and the apostles was transcendent, became a visible and historic society. The ideal and the real were confused. God wills to rule the world through the Church, and the Church reigns through its hierarchy. In his Church, and by his ministers, God gives his oracles, distributes his graces, rewards, absolves, or punishes. Outside the Church is no salvation, because apart from her Christianity is a pure abstraction, less than nothing. For this Church there could be no question of weakness or erring, since beyond the promises of indefectibility, which were made to it by its founder, it is nothing other than the Word of God made flesh, the very truth itself rendered visible and permanent on earth in a historic institution.[2]

Thus at last, but not before the third century, we meet the Catholic dogma of the Church. It comes forth from the womb of history by a

[1] See the conception of the City of God in "Augustine."
[2] Appendix XVI.

long and painful birth process, and is to be naturally explained, like every other historic phenomenon, by the inner logic of ideas and things, the circumstances of the time, the genius or the ambition of men. Rome had laid its first foundation by promulgating the Rule of Faith against heresy; she completed the edifice by her theory of Apostolic Succession, which became the foundation of the authority of the bishops. These two new theories constitute the very essence of the Catholic conception of the Church. It remains to examine both more closely.[1]

CHAPTER THREE

TRADITION

I

Historic and Supernatural View

In a general sense, tradition is the bond of the generations of the human race, which by this succession form an organic sequence, transmitting to the last comers the heritage of those who preceded them. It is the light of time, the woof of history, the permanent consciousness of humanity.

Every society engenders traditions which become the treasure house of its memories and customs, its spiritual acquisitions, its laws, all the fruit of its life. From this private treasury it continually draws lessons and examples, inspirations and virtues, an experience and a practical sagacity which nothing else can supply. This is the condition of all progress, and the law of life. That which is without a past has no future.

If we compare tradition to a stream flowing down the ages, it is

[1] Appendix XVII.

clear that that happens to it which happens to all rivers; as it travels farther from its source its increasing waters become imbued with the washings of the various earth strata through which they pass. To drop the figure, it is a historic law that every tradition not fixed in writing changes in process of development; the more distant it is from the events, so much the more their image and memory becomes altered and transformed, and the final form of the tradition differs from the original character which was its starting point, unless a vigilant and severe criticism has unceasingly sifted it, to free it from intermingling legends and superstitions, and maintain it in primitive purity. The duty of criticism is thus as imprescriptible as the rights of tradition.

Without the first, the second would remain fruitless, or rather, would become an invincible obstacle to progress. It would be the enslavement of progress. It would be the subjection of the present and the future to the past, the stagnation and ultimate decay of the human mind.

In the Renascence the alliance of stimulating criticism with conserving tradition wrought victory in the sciences, in philosophy, politics, and art, and since that time it has shown itself admirably fruitful. Men have understood that the heritage of the ages, however precious, cannot reasonably be accepted except with reserves. Tradition hands down everything, good and bad, error and truth, excellent habits and barbarous customs, generous sentiments and detestable institutions. We thus understand Pascal's saying: "Humanity is a man who is to live forever, and learn without ceasing." From this point of view the moderns are the ancients, since they have a longer experience behind them. The ancients, on the contrary, are the younger, they are the children, because they came in the early ages of the world. How should the judgment of ripe age be subordinated to the first reasonings of youth?

This rational view of tradition is not the Catholic view; it is distinguished from it by one essential characteristic. In the Church tradition belongs to the supernatural order. The truth transmitted and the

act of transmission are alike clothed with divine character. The tradition of the Church becomes the sovereign rule of truth, and by that fact is raised above criticism and discussion.

The tradition of the Church is often opposed to Holy Scripture, especially since the controversies evoked by Protestantism. From the historic point of view, this opposition is absolutely without justification, since the Scriptures are simply the earliest form of the tradition, fixed in books, and thus shielded from alteration and neglect. If the question is What was primitive Christianity? it is evident that the apostolic writings are the best source of information at the historian's disposal, since they are the most ancient and the most faithful testimony which we possess. What might be told of the life of Christ after the close of the second century, outside of these written events, is almost worthless.

But from the dogmatic point of view the question is reversed, at least in Catholicism. The Church has definitely decided what must be held as sacred scriptures, and what must be looked upon as apocrypha. The traditional faith of the Church alone gives legitimate interpretation of the sacred texts. The supreme judge of controversy is therefore not Scripture, but tradition. The first is subordinate to the second. There is in the Church a latent tradition of truth, of which the biblical writings are merely a first emanation, and from which they cannot be separated without losing all guaranty and value. The Council of Trent placed in the same rank, as issuing from the same source of inspiration, apostolic Scriptures and tradition, beliefs and customs received by oral transmission from the apostles to our time; and that none may, as do the Protestants, set these authorities over against one another, and criticise tradition in the name of the Bible, it pronounced anathema those who warp the Scriptures according to their own sense, and in the last resort it gave the Church alone the right to judge of the texts, and the interpretation to be put upon them.[1]

The Church is not merely assisted by the Holy Spirit in guarding the ancient writing; it is equally her mission to explain, complete, and

[1] Appendix XVIII.

enrich this primitive deposit in the progressive measure which new times may require. Tradition is never exhausted and never fixed. It is an ever creative inspiration. As the permanent incarnation of the Word of God, the Church pronounces this Word sovereign whenever it speaks by the mouth of those who have the right to speak in her name. Formerly she had bishops and councils for her organs. To-day she is concentrated in the papacy. But it is still tradition which gives authority to the Pope, as formerly to the Councils. In tradition infallibility properly resides.

How was so extraordinary a theory formed? At what precise date did it appear? What causes produced it and made it victorious? Through what forms and what stages did it pass, from Irenæus and Tertullian, who laid its first foundations, to the point of perfection and concentration to which it has attained in our day? As many chapters as questions, but history to-day throws full light upon them all, leaving no smallest place for miracle or mystery.

II

The Authority of Tradition in Judaism

All religious traditions, at least those of antiquity, appear invested with a sacred character. They were incarnated in priests, who, in the name of the Divinity itself, taught other men the rites and dogmas according to which it would be adored. Thence the anxious scruples and fastidious care which were given to the recitation of formulas and the performance of acts of worship. A tradition of this nature taking form in the Christian Church of the early centuries, while the habits of ancient cults weighed heavy upon it, is not, therefore, a unique nor even an exceptional phenomenon. It may be found repeated all along the history of religions, following a very clear psychological and social law. Nothing is more in the nature of things, and it would have been truly a miracle had it been otherwise.

A striking parallel, not to cite others, offers itself in the history of Judaism. The Mosaic law, built up and definitively put into form in the time of Ezra, appeared, notwithstanding its minute prescriptions, incapable of sufficing for itself. Almost immediately an oral tradition, to accompany and protect the sacred text, was drawn from the teaching of the rabbins, as Catholic tradition was later born of that of the bishops and Fathers of the Church. The Pharisees became the jealous guardians of this rabbinic tradition, and to give it the more cogent authority it was dated back to Moses, precisely as the bishop and councils traced the traditions of which they were the repositories to Christ and the apostles.

Little by little the legend became accredited, that after having given the written law on descending from Mount Sinai, Moses farther transmitted orally to the elders many precepts and commentaries; they in turn bequeathed them to the prophets, and from the prophets they came down without interruption to the men of the Great Synagogue. Thus the Scribes, as Jesus said, were truly, according to their tradition, sitting in Moses' seat, as the bishops later in that of Christ.

From that time it became as sinful to contradict this tradition as to violate the law itself. In Pharisaism, as later in Catholicism, the Scriptures came under subjection to oral tradition, for the reason that the master of the interpretation is always the true master of the text.

Here again, as in the history of Catholicism, the authority of tradition rendered all reform impossible. All truly inspired souls, all reformers and prophets, fell and were broken against this sacred barrier. This was the fate of John the Baptist, it was the fate of Christ himself. Between him and the Pharisees began at the very outset a contest concerning the authority of "the tradition of the elders." One needs only to read the Sermon on the Mount, and the discussions about the Sabbath, fasting, unclean food. Jesus accused them of making void the law of God himself by the commandments of men, and of binding weak consciences with heavy chains. They in return could not forgive him

the freedom of his inspiration, the boldness of his conduct, and his discourses, which tended to nothing less than the downfall of the entire edifice of Jewish piety. It was the eternal struggle, soon to be repeated in the very Church of Christ, between traditional formalism and the inspirations of conscience.

Is it impossible to establish a more direct line of descent between Pharisaic tradition and the origin of the Catholic idea? The first Christians, coming out from Judaism, had been brought up on the principles of Pharisaism. What is there surprising in their retaining its mental habits, and especially that respect for tradition which was still all-powerful in the Semitic East? What did James, the brother of the Lord, and the apostles in Jerusalem, but maintain, against Paul and his disquieting inspiration, the scrupulous care of the "oral tradition" concerning the words and example of Christ? Why were they called the "pillars" of the Messianic Church, if not because they were the upholders of its tradition? Does not the entire second Christian century, whether in the person of those who were already called "the Catholics," or of the Ebionites, or of the Gnostics, make common appeal to the tradition of the elders, as to a decisive authority? The Church had inherited and was keeping alive the habits of the synagogue.[1]

III

The Earliest Christian Tradition

We must not form our ideas of early Christianity from its organisation and its dogmatic in the time of Constantine, still less from those of modern times. Between the first age and those which followed there is all the difference between matter in a state of fusion and matter grown old and solid.

[1] "Hom.," Clement, letter of Peter to James, first lines; "Recognitiones," I. 21, I. 45, x. 42. See, also, Acts xv., xxi. 20 ff.; Gal. ii. 1-15. It will be remembered Basilides and Valentinian also took advantage of a special apostolic tradition.

Unity of association arose spontaneously from unity of hearts and the common possession of an ardent hope. The profession of faith of the first Christians was short: "Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah," and their watchword shorter still: *Maranatha*, "The Lord is at hand." Without exception they all lived in the belief, at that time so widespread, that the last days of the existing order were at hand; and this belief, doing away with the idea of a long future, at the same time dispensed them from all care and trouble with a view to founding a permanent establishment here below.[1]

It is impossible to imagine a greater delusion than that of the Roman Catholic Church, when it seeks to discover its own image in this primitive society. We are here in the age of apocalyptic Messianism, of free inspiration, of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.[2]

Jesus wrote nothing nor caused anything to be written. He never dreamed of giving a second volume to the Bible of the Jews, still less of creating another sacerdotal order and new ceremonies. He left neither dogmas nor rules other than the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount, or the teachings of his parables and the promise of his return. He desired to have only apostles, that is, "messengers," to preach everywhere that the time was fulfilled and the Kingdom of Heaven was about to appear. That a new religion resulted from the preaching of this gospel was because, under the Messianic form, which it at first took on, there was the contagious sentiment of an entirely new relation, a filial relation to God, of a new revelation of God in the heart of man, as a divine leaven, an all-powerful grace, which should regenerate and fecundate the entire life of humanity.

Thus the Master confided his gospel to the free and living preaching of his disciples and the assistance of the Spirit.

[1] Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 15, ix. 1., and paral. Matt. xxiv. 33, 34; Acts ii. 17; 1 Cor. vii. 29; Gal. i. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 1 Pet. i. 5; Jas. v. 3, 8, 9; Rev. i. 1, xxii. 20; Heb. x. 25, 37; 1 Jno. ii. 18, "Teaching of the Apostles," cxvi.

[2] See the description of the inner life of the first Christian community, 1 Cor. xii., xiii.

But as they were repeated these discourses took on permanent forms. Thus spontaneously sprang into life the first Christian tradition, like all historic traditions: it was formed naturally from the stories of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which the apostles must have told in order to show by them the fulfilment of the prophecies, and persuade all men that this was indeed the Messiah of the people.[1] In Christian circles the tradition grew daily richer by what each had learned and related of the " deeds and words " of the Master, as in the second century said Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, so curious and avid for these words of the ancient witnesses. Thus, at the end of twenty or thirty years, we find the gospel message and the substance of Christian preaching commonly designated by the terms " tradition," " pattern of teaching," the " good deposit " which must be treasured up and guarded with care.[2]

The mirage and illusion began when people began to imagine that this initial tradition was the deliberate and premeditated work of an official authority, and that the apostles, in college assembled, enclosed it in rules and formulas. This was entirely to misapprehend the true office of the apostles, and the character of that age, in which all Christians, baptised with spirit and fire, enjoyed the sacred and fruitful gift of inspiration.

Without any doubt, on their own testimony, the Twelve began to lay the foundations of this tradition, which for this reason may be called " apostolic," but they were not alone in this work. All those who knew or believed that they knew something about Christ, all those who had received or believed that they had received some heavenly revelation, brought their gift to the common treasury. Little by little it all began to be epitomised and organised, yet without taking on a single and permanent form. Born of memory and faith the tree grew naturally,

[1] Acts. ii. 22-36, viii. 26-35, x. 34-43; 1 Cor. xv. 1-3.

[2] The Gospel was currently called a " Word," the " Word of God," the " Received Word," παράδοσις, τύπος διδαχῆς, παραθήκη. Luke i. 2; 1 Cor. x. 23, xi. 2, xv. 1-3; 2 Tim. i. 14; Rom. vi., 17; 2 Thess. ii. 15, etc.

and day by day adorned itself with new flowers, or even with new branches.[1]

To become convinced of this absence of all fundamental or official decision, to grasp the movement and life of this first tradition, its progressive enrichment and incessant variability, it will suffice to follow it in its two constituent parts, the acts and teachings, that is, the biography of Jesus, and the interpretation which was put upon it. In both parts there is a common stock, a harmony of essential data and large outlines. But as we advance, what a variety of concurrent forms! What inconsistencies! What polemics and conflicts!

The "sayings of the Lord" became, side by side with the Old Testament, the ultimate norm to which to refer for resolution all questions that might arise in the life of the earliest communities; they were therefore carefully gathered up, repeated, and memorised.[2] It appears highly probable that the first Gospel writings were collections of these "sayings" or *logia*, which the second Christian generation must especially have felt the need of collecting and putting in definite form.[3] In any case it is certain that such were still cited from memory at the beginning of the second century.[4]

Half a century after the death of Jesus the tradition of the events of his life, while already firm in its large outlines, was far from being identical in all regions where Christianity prevailed. Here it was very rich, and there very meagre. Thus is explained the great variety in the first written narratives, with which Luke was not satisfied, and which he

[1] The latest of these branches, one of the most beautiful and fruitful, is represented by the Fourth Gospel.

[2] 1 Thess. iv. 15, v. 2; 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, ix. 14; Rom. xii, 14, 20, etc.

[3] It is now generally admitted that the Apostle Matthew composed an Aramæan collection of this kind. In any case, Luke and the author of the First Gospel had such collections at their disposal. Luke i. 1-4; Prologue, and the testimony of Papias in Eusebius, H. E. III. 39.

[4] This is the case with Clement of Rome, with Papias, Ignatius, and Polycarp, who, though they were acquainted with this or that written gospel, preferred to draw from oral tradition. As much may be said of the authors of the "Teaching of the Apostles."

undertook to correct, complete, and harmonise in a new account.[1] These were private and entirely occasional works, which naturally reflected the environment in which they were produced.

Papias, following a still more ancient witness, tells us that Mark, the interpreter of Peter, put into writing the acts and sayings of Jesus, according to his memory of the preaching of that apostle; but as the teaching of the latter was determined by the occasion, Mark could not draw from it a connected and complete whole, and he deserves no blame, since he simply undertook to relate, without falsehood or alteration, the things which he had thus learned.[2] Luke, with other resources, did no otherwise. This is how, in the New Testament canon, we have not a single Gospel, as would have been the case had the apostles ordered the preparation of one, but four narratives sufficiently different for us to be incapable at the present day of reconciling their data and resolving their inconsistencies. Where do we find the official authority of the apostles intervening to direct this work of writing which was to have such importance for the destinies of the Christian religion? It was with the early Christian literature as with all popular literature, echoes of a free and living tradition; it was born of the circumstances and the needs of each day.[3]

Until about the year 130, the time of Polycarp and Papias, the divers Gospel writings were still encompassed by the oral tradition from which they had issued, and by which they continued to be nourished. But by the time of Justin Martyr they had finally absorbed all the substance of tradition, and had taken its place in Christian confidence. One thing is worthy of remark: all that it has been possible to glean outside of our four Gospels about the life of Jesus in the subsequent tradition of the Church is of very little, not to say of no, value. It is not that tradition was sterile, on the contrary it was prodigiously fecund, as the Apocryphal Gospels bear witness, but it brought forth only legends.

[1] See the prologue of Luke's Gospel, i. 1-4.

[2] Euseb. H. E. III. 39. Testimony of John the Elder, preserved by Papias.

[3] This is even more true of the apostolic letters than of the Gospels.

Christian tradition is therefore not of divine institution. It was born and developed from beginning to end after the manner of all historic traditions, which grow richer as they grow older, but bring with them so much the less warrant in proportion as they travel farther from the time and place of their origin.

Catholic theology was right in maintaining against the old Protestant theology that Scripture is born of tradition; but it was wrong in concluding therefrom that the later tradition may have as much weight as the writings of the New Testament, or more; since the latter represent a more ancient, and by so much more faithful, tradition. The truth is that all tradition calls for historic criticism and its methods of verification. There is no other way of discerning how much it is worth.

If such is the variability of tradition as to the events of the life of Jesus, how much greater must it be as to the forms of his preaching and teaching! In that age of general inspiration, diversities of gifts and of environment must have been more acutely felt in this field than elsewhere. Thus we see, even in the apostolic generation, the appearance of very different types of doctrine and preaching. When the Apostle Paul said "my gospel," opposing it to that of his adversaries, he had a very vivid conception of all that was specific, new, and original, in his doctrine. He was not unaware, as his letter to the Christians of Galatia shows, that his doctrine and mission were an occasion of scandal, and a cause of violent polemic and hatred to the Pharisæo-Christians of Jerusalem. James, the Lord's brother, did not preach after that fashion. Though they and Paul alike confessed Jesus "the Messiah of glory," they hardly agreed as to the meaning of his death, the nature of his person, or in their notions of faith and redemption. In what concerned the law of Moses and the national customs of Israel, the difference in their attitude and utterances reached open conflict, the latter declaring them definitively abrogated, the former preserving them.[1]

[1] Testimony of Paul in Gal. i., ii.; testimony as to James in Gal. ii. 1, 2; Acts xv. 1, 2, 13 ff, xxi. 18 ff; see all the second part of the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, and

Between these extremes, how many intermediate types formed the transition and filled the wide space! It suffices to recall the names of Apollos, Peter, Philip, John, who represent very distinct tendencies.[1] And are not these varieties found in the New Testament, where we find by turns writings so different in method and thought as the Epistle to the Romans and that of James, the Gospels of Mark and of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse? That there was unity of religious faith, of the first inspiration, we admit, indeed, but what a wealth and what a diversity of theologies! Does it not clearly appear that no rule, no official *credo* yet existed, and that no exterior authority had risen to cramp or stifle the spontaneity of individual inspiration?

A curious little book recently discovered, which dates from the first third of the second century, but represents a condition of things still more ancient, brings a yet more significant testimony. "The Teachings of the Lord according to the Twelve Apostles" contains, brought together in a few pages, the Catechism, the Liturgy, and the ecclesiastical discipline which regulated the teaching, the worship, and the inner life of the communities of Palestine or of Syria under the reign of Trajan, at latest. The gospel is here summed up under the figure of two roads, one of which leads to life and the other to death, with a few maxims borrowed from the Sermon on the Mount. There are only two rites: Baptism and the Eucharist, and the prayers which accompany them, though of a fine mysticism, seem entirely to ignore the teachings of Paul. Finally, the edification of the communities is still in great part effected by itinerant prophets and evangelists, in presence of whom is felt the necessity of recommending that the former should be placed in care of deacons and bishops regularly elected and settled. Comparing this venerable document with the "Apostolic Constitutions" of

Phil. i. 15-18, iii. 2, etc. Hegesippus in Eusebius upon the Pharisæo-Christians, bitter enemies of Paul. To measure the consequences and the notoriety of these early contentions one must read the Clementine Homilies.

[1] See what Paul says in the first three chapters of his first letter to the Corinthians, and especially 1 Cor. iii. 10-15.

the fourth century, it is easy to measure the progress made by the Church. Nevertheless, it is a first landmark set up, a first attempt to give legal and official form to apostolic tradition, and it brings back a past in the act of disappearing and preparing the way for a new future. The road is open. Henceforth ecclesiastical authority will take precedence of inspiration. The principle of future legislation is laid down. It is the doctrine, the tradition of the apostles.

True, the tradition was still rudimentary and floating. We shall see how, by the polemics of the second century, it reached definiteness and precision.

IV

The Baptismal Formula and the Apostolic Symbol

It was inevitable that the dogmatic crystallisation of this still fluid tradition should take place, as by degrees it did take place, around the point of least resistance in the new cult. That point was baptism, with the profession of faith which from the beginning had been associated with it.

Not that we have not here, as elsewhere, an evolution of ideas and forms. But the development is in a straight line, and can be followed with something like certainty. Baptism was in the beginning a literal bath, an entire immersion. By the close of the first century a triple aspersion of water upon the head might suffice at need.[1] Originally it included the idea of the purification of the soul by repentance and the forgiveness of sins. To this idea was added, in the second century, that of a sacrament of initiation and illumination analogous to those of the pagan mysteries.[2] Finally, as we shall see, innovations were made

[1] "Teaching of the Apostles," vii: Ἐὰν δὲ ἀμφότερα μὴ ἔχῃς (running water or warm water) ἔκχεον εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν τρὶς ὕδωρ εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος.

[2] With regard to the relation between the Christian sacraments, baptism and the Eucharist, and the pagan mysteries, see the work of Gustav Anrich, "Grosskirche, Gnosticismus, und Mysterienwesen," 1894. Justin Martyr calls baptism φώτισμος, a word which appears to have been borrowed from the language of the mysteries, 1 "Apol.," 65. See, however, Heb. x. 22-32; Eph. i. 17-19.

in the invocation pronounced over the head of the persons baptised. Change is everywhere, fixity nowhere.

Was the institution of baptism the act of Jesus himself? In the present condition of the text it is impossible to prove it. The command of Matthew xxviii. 19, which seems to attribute it to him, is not only posthumous, but even appears late in the tradition of the Apostolic Church. No other Gospel contains it.[1]

If Jesus had left so formal a commandment to his apostles, could Paul have written to the Corinthians that Christ had *sent him, not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel*, and could he have thanked God that he had baptised with his own hands only three or four persons in Corinth? Would he not rather have had reason to reproach himself for having failed in an express command of Christ?

Baptism with water dates back to John the Baptist. Jesus considered this rite, which was preparatory to the Messianic kingdom, as willed by God,[2] but anterior to the new covenant and foreign to it. The disciples at first practised it in the same spirit as the Forerunner, having in view, as he had, the approaching advent of the triumphant Messiah.

The Messiah's baptism was to be of a different nature. It was the "baptism with the Spirit and with fire," which in John's discourses was distinctly opposed to the baptism with water.[3] It is the only baptism with which Paul is concerned. In the beginning the two were very clearly distinguished, as may be seen in the book of the "Acts of the Apostles," where the effusion of the Spirit sometimes precedes and sometimes follows the baptism with water, with no necessary connection between them.[4] But as by degrees the Church and the Kingdom of Heaven became identified, entrance into the latter came to be confounded with entrance into the former; the bath of purification in view of the Kingdom became confused with the effusion of the Spirit, the warrant

[1] Appendix XIX.
[2] Mark xi. 30, and paral.
[3] Matt. iii. 11, and paral.; Acts i. 5.
[4] Appendix XX.

and principle of eternal life, and the sign took the place of the thing signified. By this swift descent, second-century Christianity very soon reached the superstitious idea of the *opus operatum*.[1]

From the accordant testimony of Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles, it appears evident that, originally, baptism was administered simply "in the name of Christ."[2] The new convert who received it in this form confessed his faith in the Messiahship of Jesus. And as the Christ whom above all Paul preached was the Christ who died and rose again, this apostle saw in baptism a representation in action of the intimate union of the believer with Christ in his death and resurrection, so that the baptised person seemed to be buried with Christ and to rise with him to the life of the Spirit. Later, especially in the pagan world, this elementary form appeared to be no longer sufficient. Catechumens of pagan origin needed to be converted to the true and living God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and to be initiated into the regenerating virtues of the Holy Spirit, as well as into the redemption wrought by the Son of God, the Saviour of all men. In the churches founded by Paul, such was the threefold object of the instruction given to catechumens, and such the faith which they professed at their baptism, summed up in the formula which has become traditional: *Into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

By degrees the terms of this formula were developed until finally it became the well-known symbol called "Of the Apostles." But this was a work of time and effort.

Toward the middle of the second century we find a rule of faith which the converts doubtless recited on the occasion of their baptism and admission to the Church. It was thus worded:

I believe in God, Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus his Son, our Lord, born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary, virgin, Crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried, on the third day rose from the dead, Ascended into heaven, Sitteth on the right hand of the Father, From whence he

[1] Appendix XXI. [2] Appendix XXII.

cometh to judge quick and dead. And in Holy Spirit, Holy Church, Remission of sins, Resurrection of the flesh.[1]

It is not yet precisely the Apostolic Symbol; several articles are incomplete, and others are wanting. But it is the first form of that symbol, and it very evidently owes its structure to the threefold baptismal formula. To each of its terms, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have been added explanations and more complete determinations, to clarify the faith of catechumens.

What were the causes of this development? They may be traced back to two: on one hand the progress of catechetical instruction, the necessity of giving to converts from paganism a more detailed and positive knowledge of what was considered the essence of the Christian faith; on the other, and especially, carefulness to avoid Gnostic heresies and build up a protecting barrier between such and the universal Church. It is not by an unimportant coincidence that this rule of faith was put in force precisely in those years between 135 and 150, when Valentinian and Marcion were agitating this great Church with their preaching, and Justin Martyr was opposing them with the most violent polemics. In this same period, as we shall show in the following chapter, the monarchical Episcopate appeared at Rome, with Pius I. Everything there tends to show that in the last years of the age of Hadrian and Antoninus the Pious, the community in Rome was passing through a profound crisis, whence emerged clearly defined doctrine, concentrated ecclesiastical authority, and established discipline.[2]

That which, with singular energy and order, was going on in Rome, was also taking place in all the great churches of the time. It was everywhere necessary to instruct the simple, to provide them with a criterion of the true faith which should be easy to remember, and to erect a barrier against the confusion and absolutism of Gnostic speculation or the speculations of Montanism. Everywhere, therefore, rules of faith were being roughly blocked out, which, being naturally built upon

[1] Appendix XXIII. [2] Appendix XXIV.

the threefold baptismal formula, strongly resembled one another without coinciding in details. Traces of more or less developed professions of faith may be found in the later writings of the New Testament, especially in the Epistles called Pastoral, and in the writings of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Hermas, Justin Martyr.[1] Sometimes they are shorter, sometimes more explicit. One article is strongly supported because its existence had been threatened; another is passed by in silence because it has in no sense been a subject of dispute. In short, down to about the year 150, the symbol recited by catechumens varied according to time and place; it was in process of elaboration and development. In the end it attained its most clearly defined form in Rome, and from thence it was carried into the East, and especially into the West. It took possession of the Churches of Africa and of Gaul, where Tertullian and Irenæus found it strongly intrenched under the name and with the authority of "Doctrine of the Apostles," and "Rule of the Truth."

V

Genesis of the Catholic Theory of Tradition

The notion of tradition implies three terms: a point of departure, a point of arrival, and the link that connects them. In the Catholic theory the point of departure is God himself; the point of arrival the Church militant; the connecting link, the apostles and the legitimate line of their successors. The intermediate link is therefore the essential term. On one side the apostles take hold on Christ and so on God; on the other they make part of the Church and represent it. It is by their means that revelation, given from heaven and coming to men, remains divine to the very end, without perversion or corruption. Apostolicity must therefore be the inevitable and essential mark of Catholic

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 5, iii. 16, and especially vi. 12, 13; 2 Tim. i. 14, ii. 2; Titus i. 9; Clem. Rom., 1 Cor. 58; Ignatius, "Epist. ad Trall.," 9; "Ad Smyrn," 1; "Ad Eph.," 7; "Ad Magn.," 11; Polycarp, "Ad Philipp.," 2; Justin Martyr, "1 Ap.," 61; "Dial.," 30.

tradition. Here we touch the very corner stone of the infallibility of the Church.

This dogmatic theory of tradition presents itself for the first time defined and settled in the form of an infallible and sovereign law, in the writings of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Hyppolitus. These writers were led to formulate it by their polemic against Gnosticism and other heresies of their time. With perfect candour they explain its genesis. They forged this weapon on the field of battle, to insure a victory that had been long uncertain.

What subjects were in dispute in those theological frays of the second century, whose turmoils and confusion give an idea of chaos? The question was of the true doctrine, and how it could be recognised. To consent to discussion with teachers of heresy was dangerous on many considerations. In the first place, there was no hope of either refuting or convincing them. In the domain of science or exegesis, Catholic bishops, with all their admirable virtues, were weak before a Valentinian or a Marcion. Besides, this would be to descend to the shifting sand of individual and subjective opinion, with its endlessly renewed philosophical processes. Should they appeal to the apostolic writings, the canon of which the Church had but then completed? But here they would encounter that criticism which the adversaries so freely exercised upon both the text and the origin of these writings. Or indeed, like Marcion, they had a different collection, or the texts were not the same, or finally, the interpretation of them differed indefinitely, thanks to the allegorical method then everywhere in use, which permitted either party, in all good conscience, to make the Scriptures speak in his own favour. It was as difficult to come to an agreement upon the meaning of the text as upon the truth of the doctrine, since, in all the camps, it was in fact the latter which determined the former. Therefore Tertullian could not admit of an appeal to the Scriptures, in a discussion with heretics.

The dispute was, indeed, over the Scriptures themselves, and this

being the case, it could only be decided by a superior authority. Thus at this juncture the authority of tradition was practically made superior to that of the Bible, for it was tradition which had decided as to the contents of the sacred canon, had chosen between the books, those which were to be admitted to it and those which must be excluded from it, and tradition still gave the rule for rightly using and rightly understanding them.[1]

If the tradition of the Church was to be final arbiter of controversy, it must needs take on definite form and find a popular mode of expression. We have already seen that about the same period it attained to both in the baptismal profession of faith.[2]

Such is "the sovereign law," "the canon of truth." Irenæus and Tertullian thus reason about it: The mark of the truth of a doctrine is its legitimacy. Legitimacy shows itself in antiquity. Heresies are false because they are new. Rising up to disturb the churches and attacking established tradition, they prove by the very lateness of their appearance that the tradition existed before them. The warrant of the true faith is found in all the apostolic churches, Rome, Ephesus, Corinth, Antioch; in the uninterrupted succession of their bishops, the first of whom were instituted by the apostles themselves, and received from them the authentic faith which it was their duty to preach. To hold fast to this tradition without wavering is the necessary line of conduct, the rule which all must follow. The sole verity which we must believe is that which in no respect differs from it. Outside of tradition there is only uncertainty and confusion.[3]

Polemics were thus grandly simplified and put within the reach of

[1] Irenæus, "Adv. Hær.," iii. 2; Tertullian, "De Pres. Hær.," 17.

[2] When the advocates of Church tradition undertake to explain what they understand by this word, they simply recite the symbol or rule of faith at the time in force, which they consider as transmitted by the Apostles to their successors, and handed down to themselves by the uninterrupted series of bishops. Irenæus, I. 10, 1, III. 4, 2; Tertullian, "De Præscrip. Hær.," 13, 20 f.; "Adv. Prax.," 2.

[3] Tertullian, the entire treatise "De Præscriptione"; Origen, "De Princip.," I. Præf., 2 and 4; Hippolytus, "Philosophoumena."

the most humble believer. There was no longer any need of discussing the intrinsic proofs of truth; it bore an infallible external mark—its legal description given by the bishops themselves.

By the same act the Church, which had been a party to the suit, was made judge of last appeal. She no longer had to plead at the bar, but only to pronounce sentence. She no longer disputed with heretics, she condemned them. By this juristic expedient, which Tertullian so well defined and named *prescription*, heretics were already barred out. They came too late. The mere fact that they were outside of the tradition of the Church sufficed to prove them outside of the truth. From Tertullian to Bossuet the argument never varied; it may thus be summed up: "New idea: certain sign of revolt and error."

What a distance had been travelled from Papias to Tertullian, and how had the very idea of tradition been metamorphosed! Papias, too, had made appeal to "the living and enduring word," and preferred it to the single books, born of the occasion, which circulated in his time. But what he thus sought was a historic method of increasing his knowledge. He did not appeal to the juridical decision of authority, based upon the regular order of episcopal succession since the apostles, he interrogated the old men who had seen Peter or John or Andrew or Philip or any other of the first disciples of the Lord, and could repeat their discourses. Fifty years later, the point of view and method of procedure of Tertullian and the Church were entirely different. The Church had left the field of history, and intrenched itself in that of dogma. Tradition was no longer testimony to be gathered, it was an official rule of faith, which the bishops first promulgated and then applied as apostolic.[1]

To raise a new historic tradition to the rank of supernatural tradition and divine, permanent inspiration in the Church itself, one must either forget history or do violence to it. The Catholic theory rests upon three premisses which are not only undemonstrable, but fictitious: 1. That the apostles drew up and left to their successors an unchange-

[1] Appendix XXV.

able formulary of Christian faith. 2. That succeeding generations added nothing, subtracted nothing, changed nothing, as to the customs and ideas which they inherited. 3. That bishops are the successors of the apostles and heirs of their gifts and privileges.

These three affirmations are wholly illusory, and a single reading of the original texts is enough to dissipate them irrecoverably. But at the end of the second century historic criticism did not exist. Men lived in the supernatural, and the stream of the marvellous flowed full. In such a time dogma becomes a prolific mother of legends. The reflection of the idea then dominant transforms the vision of the past. History is altered wherever it shows itself contrary to the dogma; where silence would do it harm it is made to speak. It is common enough to see children who have attained years of strength fostering and caring for the aged father to whom they owe life. Thus, in the course of the centuries, the pious legends of tradition came forward to legitimise and defend the dogma of which they were born.

These legends, which, we must remember, were the product and complement of the Catholic theory of tradition, came into being at three points, and from generation to generation developed along three parallel lines, with ever greater definiteness and wealth of embellishment.

1. The first were the episcopal lists, which, from about the year 180, began to be formed in all the great churches to establish the line of apostolic succession in material and tangible form. To this end traditional memories were drawn upon, and names were borrowed from the apostolic writings. Starting with Eleutherus, who died in 188, we may go back by names sufficiently authentic as far as Sixtus or Alexander, about the year 130; but back of this the lists of the early Popes or bishops of Rome have absolutely no value. The reason is simple. There was no episcopate in Rome, in any proper sense of the word, before the reign of Hadrian, as we shall presently see.

There was need of these official lists in the polemic against the Gnostic doctors and Montanist prophets; and it is a matter of experience

that documents of which any authority finds a practical need are always produced.[1]

2. The twelve Jewish apostles of Jesus appear to have restricted their teaching to their own people. Paul gives them no part in the evangelisation of the pagan world. It is one of the paradoxes of history that they should have become from the close of the second century the traditional patrons and authorities of the great churches in whose foundation they had almost no part, while Paul and his fellow-labourers, Titus, Sosthenes, Aquila, Apollos, those daring pioneers of the new religion, are forgotten, or relegated to the second rank and to obscurity. Paul is despoiled by John in Ephesus and Asia, as in Antioch and Rome by Peter, whose humble and docile satellite he becomes. This historic paradox is explained by the legends which came into being at the epoch at which we have now arrived. They show us the Twelve assembled at Jerusalem, dividing among themselves the map of the world, and then setting forth, each to conquer, with the strong aid of miracle and at last of martyrdom, the province which to him had been assigned. From the forensic standpoint of the theory of tradition, it was necessary that the episcopal order should everywhere find the name of an apostle to which to fasten its initial link.

3. Finally, to all these legends must be added, as tending to the same end, those which grew up around the Symbol of the Apostles. In the beginning the title apostolic, applied to a traditional rule of faith, was doubtless intended only to declare the essential conformity of this faith to that preached by the apostles. But soon the people began to understand it in a stricter and more literal sense. About the middle of the third century it was said and believed in Rome that the symbol had been brought to the capital of the empire by Peter himself, and consequently that it dated back to the very foundation of the Church. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, confirmed this pious legend, which Rufinus a little later embellished. Before separating, says this writer, the apostles, with a view to defining the faith which they were about to

[1] Appendix XXVI.

preach throughout the universe, conjointly put into form the terms of the symbol, which each one then carried with him. But a legend is like a plant, continually putting out new branches and flowers. Isidore of Seville knows much more about this one than his predecessors. He tells how the apostles met in conclave in Jerusalem. Each one of them, moved by the Holy Spirit, rising in turn, uttered, in the silence of the others, an article of the *Credo*. This is why the Creed has twelve articles. It became possible even to set over against each of the articles the name of the apostle who proclaimed it. The Roman Catechism at last adopted and consecrated the whole legend.[1] What more striking example could be cited of the birth, evolution, and triumph of a religious tradition!

VI

Development of the Catholic Theory

At the very time when the principle of the sovereign authority of tradition was being so brilliantly posited over against heresy, a collection of the writings which had come down from the apostolic age was being formed in the Church, under the impulse of the same circumstances, and in view of the same necessities, and was canonised as the body of the "Books of the New Testament."

Held as supernaturally inspired, these books, which passed as being either by the apostles or their immediate disciples, could not be invested with less prestige and credit than the unwritten tradition. Therefore they at once found a place beside it in common veneration. The two authorities were on an equal footing, and thus far held one another in equilibrium.[2] It even happened very often that those who sacrificed Scripture to tradition, in face of the Gnostic doctors made appeal to it against ecclesiastical authority, or the customs of a too obliging tradition. It was Tertullian himself who uttered this word, trenchant

[1] Catech. Rom. See, especially, Nicholas, "La Symbole des Apôtres," 1867.
[2] Appendix XXVII.

as a sword edge, "Christ said: I am the Truth; he said not, I am the custom!" [1]

Such an utterance offered a fecund and necessary principle of criticism for a tradition which was destined to become ever more densely incrusted with superstitions in succeeding centuries. But it came too late, and even those who repeated it broke its force by their own contradictions and inconsistencies. It was impossible that two opposing authorities, constantly at war, should long maintain an equal footing. With the progress that the priestly hierarchy and ecclesiastical centralisation were making, it was easy to foresee which would have the victory and put the other in subordination. What more convenient way of justifying it all than to say with Pope Leo the Great, "All that has been received in the custom and devotion of the Church should be considered as derived from tradition and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." [2] The descent was too slippery to be climbed again when once the bottom was reached. He who from many points of view may be called a biblical Doctor, Augustine, did not hesitate to write by way of silencing the arguments of heretics: "I should not believe the Gospel if the authority of the Church did not so determine me." [3] This is not quite the same as the more outspoken avowal of a modern ultramontane, but it prophesies and prepares for it: "But for the authority of the Pope I should not put the Bible above the Koran." [4]

To rescue the Church from the exclusive influence of Augustine and his ideas, and to bring it back to the middle path, was apparently the reason why Vincent of Lerins made himself the theorist of Catholic tradition, and put forth the famous treatise which has become the classic authority on the subject. His definition of the principle is well known: "That which has been everywhere, always, and by everyone believed,

[1] Appendix XXVIII.

[2] Sermo 77, "De Jejunio Pentecost.," 2. For the express and definitive subordination of the Scriptures, Vincent of Lerins, "Commonitorium," 2.

[3] "Contra Epist. Fundamenti," 5.

[4] K. Hase, "Handb. d. protest. Polemik," 5th ed., p. 81, 1891.

that is truly and properly Catholic." Tradition, to be authoritative, has, therefore, three marks or criterions by which it may be recognised: *universality*, *antiquity*, and *the consent of all*. On this basis doctrinal truth was finished and perfect in the Church from the beginning, and remains the same through all time and space. From this point of view, we may ask, Can there still be any question of the development of the Christian spirit in the Church? The author replies: The Church guards the deposit of faith which has been confided to her; she changes nothing in it, adds nothing to it, subtracts nothing from it; but applies herself to express in new language the ancient verities (*non nova, sed nove*), to confirm that which had been clearly defined, to define more clearly that which may have remained obscure. There will be progress in the form, but no change in the matter.[1]

This fine definition has only one fault, that of remaining abstract and formal. Where are we to find this ancient and universal doctrine? What articles of faith, what rites, are marked with the triple seal here named? Which are the documents and authentic organs of this immutable and yet progressive tradition? The Middle Ages are at one in finding them in the "Acts" of the Councils, the "Decrees" of the Fathers, and the general practice of the Church.[2] But among the Councils, which are ecumenical and which are not? Are all opinions of the Fathers authoritative? And if not, how distinguish those which must be received from those which must be rejected? Finally, among the practices of the Church, is there no distinction between the obligatory and the optional?[3] Truly, this body of Catholic tradition, fluid and fleeting, is of Protean vagueness. But why should this surprise us? By its nature tradition is alive and fruitful, it is always indefinite, because it is never exhausted. Checked and fixed, it becomes as a bond or a fetter; left fluid, mobile, uncertain, it lends itself admirably to the ex-

[1] Commonitorium pro cathol. Ecclesiæ antiquitate et universalitate profanas omnium hæreticorum novitates, 3 (al 4). *Cf.* Augustine, "De Baptism.," iv. 24.

[2] Appendix XXIX.

[3] Appendix XXX.

igencies of ecclesiastical government, which alone has the right to interpret and apply it. This is why the Church of Rome has always obstinately defended it. The infallibility of tradition is the omnipotence of the hierarchy.[1]

The theory of Vincent of Lerins was accepted until the seventeenth century. Bossuet gave it new life and developed it with his usual eloquence in his polemic against the Protestants: "Catholic truth, coming from God, had from the first his perfection. The faith simply speaks, the Holy Spirit sheds abroad pure enlightenment, and the truth which he teaches has always a uniform language. Any variation in the exposition of the faith is a mark of falsity and inconsistency." The entire History of Variations rests upon this foundation. Heresy itself is always a novelty, however old it may be; it is continually making innovations, and changes its doctrine every day. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, immutably attached to its decrees once promulgated, showing not the slightest variation since the origin of Christianity, manifests herself as a church built upon the rock, always secure in herself, or rather in the promises which she has received, firm in her principles, and guided by a spirit which never contradicts itself.[2]

A great change was coming upon the world and the Church. The progress of historic investigation, and the interior evolution of Catholicism itself, were to leave this claim of immutability without defence, and compel the theory of tradition to pass through a final transformation.

The moderns have acquired the historic sense, and this truly new faculty of understanding and reconstructing the past has given them a new vision. Nothing endures without being transformed. Life is only a process of rejecting ancient things and assimilating things that are new. How could anyone maintain that the Church has lasted eighteen

[1] The utterance of Pius IX will be remembered: "*La traditione sono io.*" He proved it by promulgating, in 1854, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

[2] "Histoire des Variations des Egl. prot.," preface and conclusion. See, also, "Premier avertissement aux Prot.," "Exposition de la doctrine catholique," 2d ed., 1679; "Conférence avec M. Claude."

centuries without varying? Where in Christian antiquity were the dogmas which the men of our own generation have seen brought to life, that of the immaculate conception of Mary, or that of the infallibility of the Pope? Or even purgatory and the theory of indulgences, the seven sacraments, the reservation of the eucharistic cup from the Christian people, auricular confession, obligatory celibacy, the priesthood, and the Mass itself in its present form? Is there in the dogmatic of the Church, in its liturgy, its constitution, a single formula, a single rite, a single institution whose origin cannot be told and the date of its birth noted? And have we not heard, in our own days, that Bossuet himself, if he had not repented, would have died a heretic?

There were two factors in the theory of Vincent of Lerins, and the Church had received two graces to enable her to accomplish her mission as the guardian and protector of the truth: the grace of fidelity in conserving the primitive faith, the grace of inspiration and discernment to complete this faith, as time might demand, and make it always and everywhere victorious over error. The animating spirit of the Church is not only receptive, it is also productive and revelatory. The second element of the theory, which Bossuet left in the shade, has to come to the front. It justifies all the variations of history, and the grace of inspiration absolves the Church from the reproach of inconstancy and infidelity.

The surprising thing is not that this transformation has taken place, since it was inevitable, but that its starting point and historic cause come from an idea of Protestant theology.

In the beginning of the last century, Schleiermacher singularly fathomed and verified the very idea of tradition by spiritualising it. 'He represented it as the interior soul, the very conscience of every 'religious society, a sort of characteristic genius, a collective spirit, which, 'while remaining faithful to its inner nature, manifested itself in ever 'new creations, presided over the development of the society, maintaining 'its moral identity, and assuring to generations to come the spiritual

heritage of generations gone by. It was a new philosophy, born of the contemplation of the movement of history.[1]

Immediately the most eminent Catholic theologians made it their own. Moehler[2] in Germany, Newman[3] in England, and many learned men, almost everywhere, developed a new theory of tradition, which prevails at the present day. Like a family or a nation, the Church has its own characteristic genius, which lives and is active in her. This genius is the Spirit of the prophets and the apostles, it is the very Spirit of God, which Christ promised to those who believe in him. Eternally creative power, light ever new, brilliantly shining in the darkness, this Spirit renews the ancient things, and brings forth from them things that are new; he opens the closed book of the Scriptures and reveals its profound significance. Thanks to him, the divine revelation is not a dry parchment in the archives of an ever receding past, it becomes real, present, unlimited. In a word, Catholic tradition is Christ himself reincarnate from generation to generation in the historic Church, which is his body, and carrying on through all the ages a perpetual ministry of mediation and revelation.[4]

The old line of argument of theologians like Bossuet, Vincent of Lerins, Tertullian, is reversed. The pyramid rests upon its apex. That which was the conclusion of the theory has become its premiss. The Church is infallible because it has the deposit of truth, and it possesses the truth because it is infallible. The circle is closed.

An interesting observation should be made here: taken all in all, the new theory is the most dangerous of concessions to modern ideas, and a complete apotheosis of the hierarchy.

Upon no other point has Roman Catholic theology an appearance of greater liberality, of closer reconciliation with idealistic philosophy;

[1] Schleiermacher, "Der christl. Glaube Einleitung," 1821. *Cf.* Marheineke, "Das System d. Katholicismus"; Hegel, "Philosophie der Geschichte," complete works, vol. 9.

[2] "Die Einheit der Kirche," 2d edit.; "Symbolik oder Darstellung d. dogmat. Gegensaetze der Kathol. u. Protest.," vol. 9.

[3] "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," 1848.

[4] Perrone, "Prælect. Theol.," ii. p. 24 ff., viii. p. 30.

as a matter of fact, on no other does she more faithfully obey the inner logic of the Catholic principle, nor better serve the hopes and plans now realised by the Roman curia.

The philosophic concession is evident; it lies in the assimilation of the life and genius of the Church with the life and genius of commonplace people. The dogma of tradition is entirely transformed. It is no longer a determined and fixed group of supernatural verities, once for all revealed. The Church not only guards the doctrine, she produces it. Dogma is born and developed in history, and, this being the case, it can be stated and explained like any philosophical production, literary or moral. That which had appeared to be fixed and solid has become mobile, its ice has liquefied, and the stream has begun to flow. But the danger is perceived.

From the absolute, doctrine has fallen into the relative. There is, then, only one way to save its infallible character, the Church itself must be deified that all its works and productions may be divine. Therefore its entire history has been canonised, it has been *supernaturalised* in its every movement. But just here appears the radical inconsistency of the system. To deify history is to deny it in its essence and reality. To say that men have followed in one another's footsteps laboriously seeking for truth, and have continually discovered it without the possibility of ever having erred, is the same thing as to say that men are struggling to do well and attain to virtue without the possibility of ever falling into sin. Infallibility, like perfect holiness, makes history useless. And, since Catholic theologians compare the Church with the divine-human person of Christ, we would say that they are falling into the error of the so-called Monophysites, who, losing the human nature of the Saviour in his divine nature, leave him only a vain appearance of humanity. In the same way Catholic evolutionists keep only a vain appearance of evolution. The supernatural dogma destroys the sincerity of history.

Let us follow to the end. In the strictest sense, the Church is simply the sacerdotal hierarchy. In this hierarchy reside the soul of the

Church, its infallible tradition, its divine inspiration. And as the Christian laity formerly abdicated in favour of the hierarchy, so has the episcopate in its turn abdicated in favour of the papacy. The Church with all its supernatural graces, its privileges, and its infallibility, is summed up and concentrated in the person of the supreme Pontiff. This person, the true incarnation of the Christ, is infallible, like the Christ whose place he holds. The Pope, like the Church, is not only the guardian and interpreter of tradition, he may at any moment create it by his inspired utterance and infallible decisions; he is the living tradition. But, this being so, it is possible to say that there is no longer any tradition. Thus completing itself, the Catholic dogma of tradition denies its own existence. Thenceforth tradition is all in the present; no one can make appeal to it against the Pope; it has, indeed, no longer any historic content; it is only a label, under which there is and must ever be nothing other than the permanent inspiration and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff.[1]

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EPISCOPATE

I

The Episcopate and Tradition

In the Catholic system tradition is to the episcopate what the body is to the soul. Their union constitutes the living organism of the Church. Without the episcopate tradition would remain a purely idealistic conception, something analogous to the Hegelian notion of the spirit realising itself and being evolved in history; it would not be a force nor a rule of government. Without tradition the episcopate would be merely a political caste whose reason for being had been lost, and whose power it would be impossible to justify. These two elements

[1] Appendix XXXI.

are all the more closely allied because each, being without integral strength, draws from the other such strength as it actually exercises.

Tradition is only another name for the well-known theory of apostolic succession, whence the Church deduces the divine right of bishops to teach truth and govern souls. It is therefore natural that tradition and episcopacy, forming an organic whole, and each powerless without the other, coming into being at the same time and from the same historic causes, should have developed along parallel lines, gaining strength each by the other, till their common ascendency became complete. A twofold illustration of the supernatural principle underlies the process; a divine act of institution at the beginning, leading in course of time to the theory that the entire institution was divine.

Boldly sketched out in the writings of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, the Catholic theory of the Episcopate was completed by Cyprian (248-258). But the history of Catholicism presents this singular law, that dogmatic theory always lags two or three centuries behind the practical reality. A certain condition is produced by the action of general and natural causes; thence, the condition being established, dogma comes in to *supernaturalise* and consecrate it in a formula assumed to be primitive and divine. The papacy had in fact exercised supreme magistracy in matters of faith, and ultimate jurisdiction in the discipline and government of the Church, for some two centuries before the Vatican Council sanctioned its authority by the dogma of the personal infallibility of the Pope, and made the Bishop of Rome in some sort the unique and universal bishop. So was it with the episcopate. We can trace it from its coming into existence in the reign of Trajan, as it laboriously establishes itself as a fact in one after another of the great churches; the theory that it had been supernaturally instituted, which Cyprian developed and the Church adopted, came a hundred and fifty years later.

Setting aside, then, all dogmatic prepossession, it is meet that we should go to history and to history alone to ask for the origin of the episcopate; its reply will be all the more clear because the natural evolu-

tion by which Christianity passed from its primitive form to its Catholic form is more visible and striking here than anywhere else.

II

History of the First Christian Community of Corinth

This evolution will appear in fuller light if, instead of drawing a general picture, all the details of which cannot be equally clear, we take the history of a particular church as the object of our observation and study. The Church of Corinth affords such an object. Three documents of undoubted authenticity and ascertained date permit us to follow its inner life for more than a century.[1]

The two letters of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian Christians, with the eighteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, open up to us the first beginnings of this great Church. The letters followed by five or six years Paul's first preaching in Achaia. What a vivid and stirring picture they give of the first community, its customs and its temperament! What spontaneity of impulse among all its members! What fraternal equality, what liberty, what superabundance of spiritual gifts and enthusiastic manifestations, which as yet no official organisation modified or reduced to order, no legal authority dominated or ruled.[2]

While insisting upon his apostolic authority, Paul neither understood nor exercised it as any other than a moral authority, wholly of persuasion. He speaks as a father to his children, as an experienced guide to new beginners; always recognising and insisting upon the autonomy of the community itself, as inwardly ruled by the Spirit of God, which it, like himself, had received.[3] Where do we find the divinely instituted

[1] These three documents, which cover the period at almost equal intervals, are the two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, which date from the years 56 and 58 of our era; the letter of Clement of Rome, written in the name of the Church of Rome to that of Corinth about the year 96; the testimony of Hegesippus, and the memoirs of Bishop Dionysius, preserved by Eusebius, H. E., IV. 22, 1, IV. 23, 9.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 10-12, x-xiv.

[3] 1 Cor. iv. 14, 19, v. 1-6, iii. 21-23, 2 Cor. i. 24.

bishop? Where is the legal and official authority? The directing power resides nowhere else than in the assembly of believers, who decide everything in last resort, after longer or shorter deliberation, precisely as in the little Greek republics, where all citizens having the right to vote assembled in the Agora to judge the accused and regulate public affairs. Here, as there, sentence is taken by the majority of suffrages.[1] In short, we are facing a true Christian democracy, with all the characteristics and all the faults inherent in this form of government.

The bond which formed and maintained the unity of the association was still simply of the mystical and moral order.[2] Christians were "sanctified," "men set apart" (ἅγιοι), forming a single body, because they had a common faith, a reciprocal love, and a common hope. Fraternal exhortation, or, in extreme cases, sequestration from the assembly of the "saints" and abandonment to Satan, were the sole means of discipline. Without the slightest doubt, here as in every social body, various functions were developed spontaneously to respond to the needs of the common life. The Spirit of God himself provided therefor, according to the apostle, by the diversity of gifts and vocations which were shed abroad in the Church. These gifts, which were considered to be supernatural, manifested themselves spontaneously on all occasions, from the vocations of apostles, prophets, teachers, administrators, down to gifts of healing the sick, of discerning the spirits, and of speaking in unknown tongues.[3]

Naturally, at this period we find no trace of a division of Christians into clergy and laity. All formed the elect people, and conversely, this people was collectively a people of priests and prophets. There were no passive members. The most humble had their share of activity and

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 3-5, whence it appears that the Corinthian Christians arrogated to themselves even the right to judge of the apostolate of Paul himself, v. 4, 13, vi. 1-5, 2 Cor ii. 6.

[2] The Christians together formed the body of Christ, because the spirit of Christ lived in each of them, and became to them as a common soul.—1 Cor. xii. 12 ff. *Cf.* Gal. iii. 27-29.

[3] 1 Cor. xii. 4-11, 28-30. *Cf.* Rom. xii. 5-8.

were by no means least necessary. The zeal of all was extreme; they needed curb and discipline rather than stimulus.[1]

What can be clearer in our sources than this free administration of the community by itself, in the absence of all directing power superimposed upon it by supernatural delegations? Paul spares it neither reproach nor counsel, but only to rouse it to action, not to substitute his authority for its own. It exercises full rights of jurisdiction upon its own responsibility, it sits in supreme tribunal, chooses its delegates and representatives, organises collections, and regulates acts of worship. The services and functions of the common life were at first freely performed by the spontaneous devotion of certain brethren whose gifts, circumstances, and character pointed them out in advance for the work. But it is certain that these very functions were never exercised except with the consent and under the control of all.

Here, as in nature, it is correct to say that the need normally created the organ. At the end of his first letter Paul mentions the household of Stephanas, who were the first-fruits of his mission in Achaia, and whose members had *ordained themselves* for the service of the community. Did he feel any need of conferring upon them any other ordination than this inward ordination of the Holy Spirit?[2] He simply exhorts the other Christians to show themselves deferential and submissive to them. So in the Epistle to the Romans he notes a zealous Christian, Phœbe, who had performed the same functions for the early believers at Cenchreæ as the family of Stephanas at Corinth, and he places her in the same rank of voluntary servant and patron of the community.[3] It is needless to say that by degrees, as the little Christian church lost its family character, and by expansion took on that of a great urban or regional association, these functions became more stable and regular.

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. Paul was obliged to recall to modesty and silence the women who were also endowed with inspiration, 1 Cor. xi. 5-16, xiv. 34. He left to the church itself the charge of regulating these matters, 1 Cor. xi. 13-16.

[2] 1 Cor xvi. 15 ff. Note the expression, ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς.

[3] Rom. xvi. 1, 2.

Provision was made for them by election by the general assembly of brethren.[1] Such was the germ whence naturally grew the orders of *deacons*, of *elders*, of *episcopoi* or overseers, which appear to have been constituted at Corinth, as everywhere else, a few years later. There is no more mystery or miracle or sacramental element in this spontaneous organisation than in those at that time found in every large city, whether in the synagogues of the Jews of the Dispersion or in the pagan associations, where we find the same interior ministrations designated by the same names.[2]

Let us pass over forty years. The letter which the church of Rome addresses to its sister church of Corinth by the pen of Clement, one of its elders, toward the end of the reign of Domitian, shows the latter church again passing through an important crisis. A part of the community, the younger and less docile part, had put itself in rebellion against the "elders and heads" established and recognised by the Church, and had even effected the deposition of some of these in tumultuous assemblies.[3] Neither in Rome nor in Corinth was there yet a bishop in the Catholic sense of the word. In his letter Clement does not dispute the right of the Corinthian Christians to depose their elders and heads. Simply, the right should be exercised only for grave and legitimate reasons, which were wanting in these circumstances, so that the revolution attempted by some appeared like the effect of jealousy, the spirit of disorder and turbulence, rather than a work of justice and piety. This is why the church of Rome blames the agitators, invites them to repentance, and to submit themselves to the elders who have been duly invested with their charge, or, if they cannot do this, to leave the country that the Corinthian community may again enter into order and peace.[4]

But such crises, even when happily quieted, cannot but leave conse-

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 19, Acts vi. 5, xiv. 23; "Teaching of the Apostles," 15.
[2] Appendix XXXII.
[3] Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 1 and 44.
[4] Appendix XXXIII.

quences behind them. The authority which they do not destroy is necessarily strengthened by the process. This was the case with the ecclesiastical authority in Corinth. The agitations and discords of the early days, of the time of Paul himself, had resulted in constituting a stronger and more legal body of presbyters, who for more than thirty years had assured the uniform progress and prosperity of the Church.[1] The crisis of the year 96 brought this Church into position for another step in the direction of greater concentration of the directing authority. Just as this authority had passed from the body of believers into the hands of a Senate, or council of Elders, so it was to pass from their hands into those of the most influential man among them, their natural head, who would thus become the sole bishop, the centre and personification of the entire community, the official guardian of the traditional faith, and the depository of the authority of all. The history of ecclesiastical evolution during the first two centuries is that of a double abdication; the assembly of believers first remit their powers to their elect men, the *presbyteroi;* and in its turn the body of *presbyteroi* or *episcopoi*—for at first both were one—becomes epitomised in a single personage, its representative, who becomes the *episcopos* by pre-eminence, the Catholic bishop, until such time as this episcopate in its turn shall abdicate into the hands of the bishop of Rome, who will thus become the universal bishop, the personification and compendium of all Christendom. To use the political language of Montesquieu, it is the passage from a state of pure democracy, first to the state of republican oligarchy, and thence to the monarchical state.

This evolution had been completed at Corinth when Hegesippus, on his way to Rome, spent some time there between the years 135 and 150. He found there a true bishop, by name Primus, under whose undisputed authority the Church so long convulsed was living in the most irreproachable orthodoxy and profound peace. A little later Dionysius of Corinth, whose influence extended far, affords a fine type of the Catholic

[1] Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 1 and *passim.*

bishop of the second century, taking a place beside Polycarp at Smyrna and Soter at Rome.[1]

III

Progressive Development of the Episcopate

THAT which had been taking place in Corinth had been taking place in almost all Christian communities in the great cities. The same history, with variations, was being repeated everywhere. An institution like that episcopacy which dominated the second century of the Church is not formed by a single act nor in one day. There was here neither special decree of institution nor act of private will. In the general movement by which the organisation of the early churches led up to the Catholic episcopate and the hierarchy, we must see the workings of a social law, and the action of historic causes, as independent of the divine arbiter, that is to say, of miracle, as of human premeditation.

The little Christian communities which were rapidly being formed almost everywhere were the work of itinerant preachers. The apostles were nothing else. Their name simply means missionary. It is an error to think that the name was reserved solely to the Twelve, or that they formed a closed college with an exclusive delegation to govern Christendom and regulate its faith. The number of apostles of Christ (ἀποστόλοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ) was in fact considerable. It was the title which those took, who, for one reason or another, whether as the consequence of some word of Jesus heard while he was in the flesh, or later as the result of a vision and a command of the Spirit, went forth spontaneously to publish his gospel and found new churches. But to have received this vocation, whether sooner or later, created in Paul's eyes no essential distinction. The chief personage, the true head of the church of Jerusalem and of the Jewish churches, was James, who was not one of the Twelve; and the greatest of the apostles to the Gentiles was Paul of

[1] Eusebius, H. E. IV. 22, 1; 23, 9.

Tarsus, who had only been called to the apostolate by Jesus after His resurrection.[1]

The notion and the representation of a directoral college composed of the Twelve alone, to whom Christ had transmitted his authority to the exclusion of all others, together with special grace for its exercise, are late and legendary. The first link of the golden chain forged by Catholicism to attach its hierarchy to the apostles is a myth.

In the beginning we find two great classes of labourers occupied with the work of God; one was the men of the word, *apostles, prophets, teachers,* the other was the "elders," the overseers or episcopoi, and the deacons.

Between them is just this difference, that the former are in the service of the Church at large, and even of the world which must be converted, and in the last analysis were responsible only to the Spirit who inspired and guided them, while the latter, on the contrary, are the ministers, the elected servants, of a particular community, and are held responsible by it for their charge.

Thence it follows that in the apostolic age freedom of teaching was absolute; it belonged to all members of the Church in their very character as Christians, for all had received the Spirit. A conflict between these free itinerant preachers and the settled official leaders of the churches was inevitable. The authority of the latter must often have suffered from the inspirations of the former. Nevertheless, this liberty was long preserved. No doubt it was the persistent cause of the troubles in Corinth, which the letter of Clement was intended to repress. Hermas, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Origen, are witnesses, down to the third century, of this ancient freedom, of which the laity was finally entirely despoiled, for the benefit of an official clergy invested with a monopoly of things divine. It was in the necessity of things that the ecclesiastical authority should lay its hand upon the office and prerogative of teaching. A verse in the Pastoral Epistles marks the movement of transition: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those

[1] Appendix XXXIV.

that labour in the word and in teaching." [1] Nothing contributed more practically to the establishment of the episcopate. The prerogatives of the office increased with the distinction of him who exercised it. In the end the entire activity of the community was concentrated in him.

Confided to the care of a single official person, doctrine was more easily guarded against innovations, and unity of teaching was more surely maintained. The "Teaching of the Apostles" preserves a curious testimony of the reaction almost universally felt at the close of the first century, against itinerant prophets and preachers, and individual inspiration.[2]

We must go back for a moment to note this capital fact; not only do we not find in the beginning any formal institution of episcopacy, or of any hierarchy whatsoever, but the names *episcopos* and *presbyteros* are equivalent, and designate the same persons; one word being defined by Greek usage, after the analogy of the pagan brotherhoods, the other by Hebraic usage, after the analogy of the synagogues. Whence it appears that we have to do indifferently with several bishops, or overseers, or several elders, or directors, in the same community. Both are "pastors," shepherds leading the flock of Christ, who remains the "chief Shepherd of souls." This identity of office appears not only in the epistles of Paul, but also in the Acts of the Apostles, the First Epistle of Peter, the letter of Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Teaching of the Apostles, and elsewhere.

The testimony of the early Church is universal, and admits of not a single exception.[3] Long after, in a period when all relations had undergone a change, St. Jerome preserved the following testimony, summing it up in these terms: "The presbyter is the same as the bishop, and be-

[1] Tim. v. 17. [The author's French translation shows his meaning more clearly. "The *presbyter* or *episcopus* who can join the gift of teaching to the duty of administration and direction has double merit, and is worthy of double honour." The Greek is, Οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιούσθωσαν, μάλιστα οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ.—*Trans.*]

[2] Appendix XXXV.

[3] Appendix XXXVI.

fore parties had been raised up in religion by the provocations of Satan, the churches were governed by the Senate of the presbyters. But as each one sought to appropriate to himself those whom he had baptised, instead of leaving them to Christ, it was appointed that one of the presbyters, elected by his colleagues, should be set over all the others, and have chief supervision over the general well-being of the community. And this is not my private opinion, it is that of Scripture. If you doubt that bishop and presbyter are the same, that the first word is one of function, and the second one of age, read the epistle of the Apostle to the Philippians. Without doubt it is the duty of the presbyters to bear in mind that by the discipline of the Church they are subordinated to him who has been given them as their head, but it is fitting that the bishops, on their side, do not forget that if they are set over the presbyters, it is the result of tradition, and not by the fact of a particular institution of the Lord." This judgment of the most learned of the Fathers of the Western Church found a place in the decree of Pope Gratian, and reappears in many ecclesiastical authors down to the seventh century.[1]

Once the Galilean idyll had come to a close with the death of Jesus at Jerusalem, the Christian religion, if we overlook the little peasant communities beyond the Jordan, presents itself in history as a religion of large cities; it gets its foothold in populous towns, in the provincial capitals of the empire, and thence radiates into all the surrounding country. Its first centres were Antioch, Tarsus, Ephesus, Smyrna, Philippi, Corinth, Alexandria, Rome, and later, Carthage, Arles, Vienne, Lyons. In these great centres the focus, the place where religious services and the agapes were held, was at first a private house, like that of Stephanas or Chloe or Titus Justus in Corinth, of Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, of Philemon at Colosse, of Jason at Thessalonica, of Lydia at Philippi, etc.[2] These little family churches were very numerous in the same city. This is certain so far as Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome are

[1] Appendix XXXVII. [2] Appendix XXXVIII.

oncerned. The power of mystic union emanating from the gospel caused hese *ecclesiolæ* to consider themselves not merely as sisters, but as mem-ers of a single larger community, which also needed a larger representa-ion and more general direction. To the central council, common to all, t is probable that each of the little groups sent a delegate to sit as *resbyter;* but it may be understood that each central council would give tself one or more *episcopoi,* charged to watch over the general interests nd needs of the entire community, and that these *episcopoi,* or this *piscopos,* becoming the head of the whole body, would enjoy a real pre-minence, and a greater authority in it. Here is yet another cause of the ormation of the episcopate. Before long the sentiment of a special ignity was attached to the title of bishop. Those who directed rival ommunities in the neighbourhood would claim it in their turn, and thus rose the *chorepiscopoi,* or village bishops, who, necessarily subordinate o him of the metropolis, constituted for the latter what was called the diocese." All this system necessarily followed the Roman adminis-rative divisions.

As for the Corinthian community, so for the other great churches, ve might fix, with a fair degree of certainty, the evolutionary period, vhich by degrees raised one of these *presbyteroi* to the place and rank of ole and sovereign bishop. At Rome, for example, the process was not nore rapid than at Corinth itself. At the close of the first century there vas still no bishop there, in the new, specific sense of the word. It ap-pears from the letter of Clement that the church of Rome, like that of Corinth, had several directors at its head, and was governed by a more or ess numerous presbyterate. Thirty years later the "Shepherd" of Hermas shows the same condition, except that he also bears witness, not vithout severe blame, to disputes which here, as in Corinth, have arisen over the episcopal office, to divisions and competitions breaking out among the *presbyteroi,* who sought the first place in the assembly of be-lievers.[1] The first who figures as bishop of Rome appears to have been

[1] Hermas, "Shepherd," Vis. II. 4, 3.

Pius, or more correctly, after him Anicetus, the contemporary and friend of Polycarp, about the year 150. Those who are cited before these men were merely "elders," several of whom no doubt sat together in the councils of the church.[1]

At Philippi the constitution of the monarchical episcopate was not less slow to form. The letter which Paul wrote to this church in the year 63 or 64 proves that at that time it was governed by deacons and *episcopoi* in the plural. In the year 120 or 121 the system had not yet been changed. The letter of Polycarp bears testimony to this in a manner which admits of no doubt.

By reason of the reputation or personal authority of some eminent leader, who was at first only a *presbyter,* several churches passed from the presbyterial to the monarchic episcopal system without shock, and almost without being aware of a change. Thus it was with the church of Smyrna, under the long leadership of Polycarp, who, born about the year 70, was already at its head in the reign of Trajan, and governed it until the year 154 or 155. Thus, no doubt, it was in the church of Antioch with Ignatius, in that of Hierapolis with Papias, and that of Sardis with Meliton. The *presbyterial* council had everywhere a president, to whom was given the pre-eminent title of *episcopos.* In all the churches, therefore, the germ existed whence the Catholic episcopate should more or less rapidly grow, according as circumstances were more or less favourable. Nowhere was there occasion to import it from without or make it out of whole cloth.

Nevertheless, this concentration of all power in a single hand, this exaltation of a single personage above all the others, did not take place without awakening protest. Revolutions, however happily conducted, bring on storms.

The local resistance encountered by the one under consideration left its traces in the books of the New Testament, which date from the epoch of Trajan, that is, from the last years of the first century, or the

[1] Appendix XXXIX.

early years of the second. There are, first, the writings which issued from the "Johannean" school of Ephesus. In the third letter of John we find an unnamed presbyter, doubtless John the Presbyter of Ephesus, denouncing to Gaius the unruly conduct of a certain Diotrephes, who desired to have the first place, and exercise the sole authority in the community, and who, to the end, does not hesitate go to extremes, even to driving from the church those who, by their fidelity to the old customs, are an obstacle to his ambition.[1]

About the same time the saying which it is claimed that Christ addressed to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church," made its first appearance with the last redaction of the Gospel of Matthew; the name of Peter became the patron and warrant of the episcopal constitution of the Church. This being the case, it is impossible not to see a protest against this tendency in the premeditated subordination in which the author of the Fourth Gospel places Peter with regard to the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Peter is neither the sole nor the surest interpreter of the Master's thought. He had need to approach it by way of the disciple who reclined in the Lord's bosom, and it even seems that while Peter went to martyrdom, the Lord had willed that John should survive and give the last directions to the churches.

All this means nothing if it does not signify that official authority is less valuable than love as a tie to Christ, and for communion with him. From the beginning the ecclesiastical hierarchy met its eternal enemy in mystic piety, inwardly confident, zealous to find God in liberty, and without intermediary.[2]

Not less significant, and with the same meaning, are the exhortations which the First Epistle of Peter, whatever its authority and date, addresses to the *presbyteroi*. There is no question of any bishop; but allusion is made, with vigorous reprobation, to those who bring no devotion to their functions, or who exercise them with an eye to discreditable bene-

[1] Appendix XL. [2] Appendix XLI.

fits, or with the ambition to rule, imagining themselves the masters of other classes of the community.[1]

Finally, we hear the same complaint from Hermas, vehemently denouncing the dissensions and wranglings for the highest rank, which are disturbing the council of presbyters in Rome, and exhorting them to repent and keep the peace by purity of sentiment, humility, and charity.[2]

But, on the whole, these voices, however numerous, were isolated, and could effect nothing to stem the current which was carrying the Christian body along. They were trying to maintain a passing order which no human power could keep from passing. In proportion as Christianity grew inwardly cold, it felt the necessity of strengthening its external unity by a more closely knit organisation. The discipline, authority, and unified government of the bishop must henceforth make good the ever growing deficit in faith, hope, and love. Future heresies were destined to hasten the movement and render it irresistible.

IV

The Priesthood

Episcopacy is something more than a monarchical government. It is a sacerdotal government; the priestly idea completes the idea of the episcopate.

In the third and fourth centuries Christianity, like the older religions, presents a priestly caste with identical functions and titles. The epithets *sacerdos*, *pontifex*, passed from the heads of Jewish or pagan priests to those of the Christian priesthood. Sacrifice became the essence of the new cult, as it had been of those of former times. There was only one difference, the ancient sacrifices were figurative and vain, while the sacrifice of the Mass was the sole true and efficacious sacrifice. But the sacerdotal notion is the same.

[1] 1 Pet. v. 1-5, especially the words κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων. The κλῆροι are the divers orders of members comprising the community.

[2] Hermas, "Shep.," Vis. iii. 9, 7-10, and "Simil.," viii. 7, 4.

Henceforth the priest is endowed with a sacred character, a divine privilege raises him above the rest of men. In his dread hand he holds the mercies and the wrath of God, he gives or refuses the expiation that seems necessary, and holds in his hand the keys of heaven and hell. As in the old religions, so in the religious system of Catholicism, to enter into relations with God the people must accept the mediation of the priest, and thus, for all that concerns the religious life, they remain in absolute dependence upon him. The Catholic Church made admirable use of the rites of worship and sacerdotal forms of the past, in organising her worship and constituting her hierarchy. Nowhere is the survival of ancient elements in new institutions more apparent. It is very certain that the idea of a new priesthood, a superior caste, among Christian people, is absolutely foreign to the thought of Jesus and to the gospel preached by the apostles. Its later triumph must be explained like many analogous historic phenomena, by the natural, and no doubt inevitable, reprisals of vanquished religions from those who overcame them only by, in many respects, perpetuating them.

If the new principle of the gospel was to be realised in a popular religious society, or even if it was to make itself understood and enter the consciousness of the old world, it could not remain purely spiritual; it was doomed, if I dare say so, to flow in the religious moulds of the past. This historic realisation of the Christian principle within the framework of pre-existing habits and notions, or, properly speaking, the delimitation of Catholicism, was the work of the first three centuries.[1]

This evolution is summed up in the history of two words: *priest* and *clergy*. Our word priest comes from the Greek word *presbyter*, to which originally all sacerdotal idea was foreign. It was precisely translated in Latin by *senior*, elder, delegated to the Senate to administer the affairs of the community. He was designated by election for services rendered, or to be rendered, precisely as were the ædiles by the electors of the

[1] See the author's "Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion," p. 233 ff. [English translation, "Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion."]

municipality, or as were the rulers of the synagogues by their fellow-worshippers. Not more in one case than another, did anyone suppose that this choice withdrew the elect from their natural position. The word presbyter has no other meaning until the middle of the second century. But it was inevitable that when the Eucharist was invested with the appearance and significance of a sacrifice, the *presbyter* should take on the form and functions of a *sacerdos*. This sacerdotal idea is so deeply embedded in the word priest, as entirely to overlay and put out of sight its original significance. Priesthood and sacerdos have become synonymous. Thus the history of words sometimes tells us that of ideas.[1]

The word *clergy* has had a precisely parallel destiny. In Greek *kleros* has the most general meaning, from that of a die for gaming and fortune-telling, to that of function, ministry, and rank or social class.[2] In one of his letters Ignatius still applies it to the whole assembly of Christians.[3] But in reality there were several classes or confraternities in each community. There was the *kleros* of ordinary members, that of widows and of matrons, that of confessors of the faith, that of deacons, elders, and bishops.[4]

The invasion and preponderance of the sacerdotal idea disturbed the equilibrium of these various classes, and entirely changed the relations between those who were clothed with it and the community. They overshadowed or subordinated to themselves all the others, as steps of the hierarchic scale, of which they held the top. The order of seniores and episcopoi became the pre-eminent ecclesiastical order, the sovereign sacerdotal caste, the clergy.[5]

A priesthood involves the idea of sacrifice. Once introduced into the system, the idea of sacrifice was therefore the pivot of the revolution which we have just described. The same movement which conducted Christian worship to the Catholic Mass also led the primitive presbytery to the sacerdotal episcopacy.

[1] Appendix XLII. [2] Appendix XLIII. [3] "Ad Ephes.," xi.
[4] Appendix XLIV. [5] Appendix XLV.

The worship required by Christ, and defined in his gospel, was worship in spirit and in truth,—that is to say, prayer from the heart, trust in the Father's love, the moral consecration of soul and life. He thus did away with victims and priests, temples and altars. More than once Jesus showed his disdain of Levitical rites and sacrifices. He cleansed the temple of the merchants who encumbered it, and ended by prophesying its approaching destruction.[1] With the Messianic era, in any case, sacrifices were to cease.[2] How then could the Christian worship have become in the course of two centuries essentially a sacrifice, and its officiating minister a priest?

It began, in the first place, through metaphor. To explain and justify so radical a change the preachers of the new religion were forced to make use of the old forms of religious speech. They said that the sacrifice truly pleasing to God was the giving up of sin; that the offering which he claimed was the gift of the heart, grateful prayer, love of one's neighbor, purity of life. Thus Paul, the most spiritualistic of the apostles, wrote to the Roman Christians, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. This is your reasonable service," that is, it is the only worship which comes within the logic of your faith.[3] The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews goes a step farther, with his resources of allegorical exegesis and his Alexandrian typology; he discovers in the new covenant the permanent reality of worship, of which the old had been only the temporary shadow, high priest and victim, temple, altar and expiatory blood.[4] This method was not without danger. The foundation of the new worship was doubtless new, but the old forms were maintained. The conception of worship remained fundamentally the same. When the spirit of the Master should breathe less warmly, when the body of Christians should grow cold, as in the second

[1] John iv. 23, 24; Matt. vi. 1-18, ix. 13; Mark vii. 10-12, xii. 33; John ii. 13-19; Matt. xxiv. 2, xxvi. 61; Acts vi. 14, vii. 42-50; Rom. xii. 1, λογικὴ λατρεία.

[2] Rev. xxi. 22: καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ.

[3] Rom. xii. 1; Eph. v. 2; Phil. ii. 17, iv. 18; Heb. iii., x.; Rev. v. 9. vi. 9, viii. 3, etc.

[4] Heb. v.-x. *Cf.* Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 40, 41, and *passim.*

century they did, then they would surely be drawn by the force of pagan habits into the old ways of the past. On one side ecclesiastical interest, conspiring with the formal and superstitious piety of Christians by birth and name only, would tend to change the apostolic metaphors into positive realities, and the Church would labor to make real in its constitution and liturgy that Levitical type of worship which the Old Testament presented to it as instituted by God himself.

All this already appears in the history of the Eucharistic Supper, which, by a process easy to follow, became the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the Mass.

In the earliest time it had been a religious feast, a fraternal banquet, analogous to the family meal celebrated by the Jews on certain days, with prayers of blessing over the bread broken and distributed, and the common cup, circulated from hand to hand.[1] To partake of the same food was to make one body of those who were fed by it. Jesus, like the pious Jews of his time, had the habit of observing feasts of this kind with his disciples, and of beginning with a prayer of thanksgiving said over the bread and the wine. It was from this prayer that the rite was named *Eucharist*.[2] It was entirely natural that the last supper of which he partook with his disciples should take on greater solemnity, and that the Saviour, just as under the influence of the vision of approaching death he had applied Mary's perfume to the embalming of his body, should in this case have shown in the broken bread and poured wine, the image of his broken body and shed blood.[3] But it does not appear that in the primitive church of Jerusalem, or later in the other communities, the idea of the death of Christ was always attached to the celebration of this family meal. No liturgy was adopted for it. Prophets and apostles improvised the prayers and exhortations which accompanied the

[1] Treatise Berachoth in Babylonian Talmud, Schwab's edit., p. 410 ff., and the Jewish Ritual. *Vide* Lightfoot, "Horæ Hebraicæ."

[2] Mark vi. 41 and paral. viii. 7, xiv. 23; 1 Cor. x. 16, εὐλογήσας, εὐχαριστήσας, ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας.

[3] Appendix XLVI.

distribution of the bread and wine, the symbol of the spiritual food with which God nourished the souls of his elect.[1]

In Paul's churches, on the contrary, the Lord's Supper was from the beginning the epitome or the symbol of the gospel of the cross, that is, of the death of Christ, who offered himself as an expiatory victim for the salvation of men. The "Lord's Supper" was meant to keep alive the memory of the sacrifice. The Eucharist was distinguished from the primitive *agape*, it preserved this special significance, and finally became the central feature of the worship. The elements of the bread and wine were thus brought into close relations with the flesh and blood of Christ. He who should unworthily eat of this bread and drink of this cup would be responsible for the body and blood of the Lord. Without any doubt the Eucharist is here still a mere memorial and symbol, but it is a symbol already full of mystery.[2]

These two conceptions of the Communion gradually drew together, mingled, and were both developed to the idea of a veritable sacrifice. The first promptly reached the idea of a sacrifice of oblation, an offering made to God by the first-fruits of those vital aliments on which the body of the community subsists; the second finally reached the idea of an expiatory sacrifice for sin.

In both cases the first idea of the Eucharist is reversed. It is no longer God who gives, it is the community which offers, that it may afterward obtain. Already in the epistle of Clement of Rome the elements of the Supper are represented as an oblation resembling the oblations of the Old Testament, brought and laid upon God's altar.[3] It is the free offering which Jehovah has already demanded by the mouth of the prophet Malachi, an offering of joy and gratitude for the fruits of the earth, for the spiritual bread and all the benefits of God, including those which are included for sinners in the death of Jesus Christ.[4]

[1] Appendix XLVII.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 18-21, xi. 17-29.

[3] Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 36, 1; 40, 1, 2; 41, 2; Ignatius, "Ad Eph."; Justin Martyr, "Dial. ad Tryph.," 117.

[4] Appendix XLVIII.

But the more the bread and wine came to be understood as the very body of the incarnate Word, the more also was the idea of a simple oblation of gratitude bound to fade and yield place to the idea of an expiatory sacrifice, and the act of the priest in the Eucharist appear like the repetition of the sacrifice accomplished by Christ upon the cross. The nature and effects of the sacrifice were identical in both cases. That is to say that the act performed at the altar had the same virtue as the death of Jesus. In other words, every day, in the Host consecrated and offered according to the official rite, Christ himself is sacrificed again. The sign has become the thing signified, and the commemoration of the sacrifice on Calvary is its perpetual repetition. Thenceforth, also, the virtue of the sacrifice was conceived more and more as magical in its effects, and extended in its efficacy. It was not limited to those who partook of it, but to all those present or absent, living or dead, whom the priest included in his prayer.[1]

With the sacrifice of the Mass the Catholic priesthood was constituted upon the model of former priesthoods. It had the same monopoly of dread and mysterious power, whether of rendering the Deity propitious, or of unchaining his wrath. The consecrating words had the same magical effect as the formulas of ancient rituals, and the same power (in case of need) to do violence to the divine will. The priest was more than a man, more than an angel.[2] The necessary mediator between earth and heaven, he controls the authority of God himself. He closes, and no man opens; he opens, and no man closes. He saves and damns without appeal. This is what is called the power of the Keys.

The separation between people and priest was accomplished. The beautiful gospel figure of the shepherd and the flock, literally received and interpreted, had been used to support this sacerdotal monopoly. It will be remembered how Lainez, the general of the Jesuits, commented upon it in a celebrated discourse before the Council of Trent: " Sheep are

[1] In the time of Cyprian the evolution was an accomplished fact, and all its consequences were unfolding themselves. Cyprian, Epist. 63.

[2] Cat. Rom., P. II. 7, 2.

animals destitute of reason, and in consequence they can have no part in the government of the Church." [1] There are, therefore, two Churches, one which includes the mass of Christian people, the other, the Church in the strict sense, is the hierarchy. To the latter pertains the office of governing and teaching; to the former that of obeying and receiving instruction.[2] Catholic architecture has expressed this division of the body of Christ by separating the choir from the rest of the church by a railing and steps. The choir is the priest's church, the rest is the church of the worshippers. Thus in ancient temples a veil or wall kept the profane multitude from the sanctuary of the god, which the priest alone had the right to enter, and there officiate.

A beautiful legend, inspired by the primitive Christian spirit, teaches that at the very hour when Jesus expired upon the cross the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was rent by an invisible hand, and the Most Holy Place, until then reserved for the High Priest alone, appeared open, and thenceforth accessible to all,[3] a figure of the holy equality acquired by Jesus for all his disciples. Nothing was farther from the mind of Jesus than to constitute a new sacerdotal order. Upon no point has his thought been more flagrantly traversed than on this, by those who call themselves his heirs. He will have no master among his own, who are all brethren. He promises to all, equally, the gift of the Holy Spirit. And in the primitive church it was the gift of the Spirit alone which made a true Christian. Peter recognised the advent of the Messianic era by the fact that the Spirit, until then reserved for certain persons, priests and prophets, was then poured out upon all flesh universally.[4] It was for this reason that every believer might speak the word of God in the assemblies.[5] The apostle Peter writes to the Christians of Asia, without

[1] Sarpi, "Hist. Conc. Trident.," VII. p. 1053.
[2] "Cat. Rom.," L. 10, 23.
[3] Matt. xxvii. 51.
[4] Matt. xxiii. 6-10, iii. 11; Mark xiii. 11; Luke xi. 13; Acts ii. 33, vi. 3, viii. 15, xv. 8; Rom. viii. 9, 23; 1 Cor. ii. 10-16; 2 Cor. xiii. 13, etc.
[5] 1 Cor. xiv.

exception: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood." This is the hymn that rings through all the Apocalypse of John: "Christ has made us kings and priests unto God his Father."[1] The idea of the universal priesthood of Christians was long held in the Church, concurrently with that of the priests, which in the end abolished it. Yet Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian still bear witness to the original authority of this idea and to its persistence.[2]

"Universal priesthood" is a metaphorical expression borrowed from the past to express something essentially new, so true it is that new ideas, to be comprehended, must appear in an old dress. But this Christian metaphor none the less distinctly opposes the monopoly and privilege of an organised priestly caste. Peter founded the universal priesthood of Christians upon this, that they offer "spiritual sacrifices, which alone are well pleasing to God by Jesus Christ." Evidently he recognised no others, he esteemed that the Eucharist also was, or ought to be, a spiritual sacrifice, which each Christian has the right to offer to God by Jesus Christ. If this is the case, all the reasons at once vanish which might be given by the priest for raising himself above the community of whom he is simply the servant.

V

Apostolic Succession

Called into being by solicitude for unity and authority in the Church, constituted by the notion of the priesthood, the episcopate was completed by the theory of Apostolic Succession. But the theory followed, not preceded, the establishment of the episcopate. It is always thus with political institutions. They must have existed in fact before anyone could dream of justifying them in law. The Capets already held the crown of France when their lawyers and theologians devised the theory of divine

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5; Rev. v. 10.

[2] Justin Martyr, "Dial. adv. Tryph.," 116; Irenæus, IV. 8, 3; Tertullian, "De Exhort. Cast."

right in order to settle it upon their heads and those of their descendants. Apostolic succession is the theory of the divine and supernatural legitimacy of the power of the bishops.

This theory, which appears at the close of the second century, was the work of the juristic genius of Rome. How could the episcopal authority, already universally established, be raised above attacks from without and discussions from within? Neither the idea of a mere historic tradition, ever subject to criticism and reason, nor that of a governmental authority emanating from the community itself, and deriving all its rights from the consent of the Christian people, could suffice to maintain order, prevent schisms, and banish heresy. The power of the government, and of those who exercised it, must be put above and outside of the judgment of the Church itself, and for that there was only one solution: to show that it was a question of supernatural power, not derived from the will of the Church, but received from heaven by official transmission, legal, uninterrupted, from God to Christ, from Christ to the apostles, from the apostles to the bishops and their successors.

A prince who is destined to reign enters the dynasty by birth. Entrance into the episcopal dynasty is by ordination.

This legal transmission of a power of divine origin is in both cases a monstrous historic fiction, but in both cases also, it is not the fiction that establishes the power, it is the power already established that gives rise to and accounts for the fiction. The dogma of apostolical succession did not make the bishops, the bishops made the dogma. Thus all returns into the natural order of things, and the mystery is explained.

Authentic history mentions no example of a bishop consecrated by an apostle, and to whom an apostle might have transmitted by this institution either the totality, or a part of his powers. For this there are two equally decisive reasons: the first is that an interval of more than half a century separates the disappearance of the apostles from the appearance of the first bishop, in the Catholic sense. The second is that in the principle itself bishops or deacons could not have been the continuators of

the apostle's office, since the two orders are essentially different. The apostle held his mission from God, and was devoted to the work of general evangelisation; he could not become the settled director of a particular parish; no apostle was ever a deacon or a bishop. On the other hand, the bishops, elders, and deacons belonged to a local church, whose responsible functionaries they were, and upon this church they could not be imposed without its consent. This being the case, the precise mode of their nomination was of small importance. No doubt the apostle or founder of a church never lost his interest in it. In some cases he perhaps took the initiative and designated those who were most worthy of choice, and these were confirmed by the assembly; in others it was the assembly which first elected its elders or deacons, whom an apostle afterward installed; or in still others it was the most capable and zealous Christians, like the household of Stephanas at Corinth, who gave themselves to the work, of their own initiative took charge of the worship and common business of the church, and were confirmed in this function by the grateful approbation of the community. But in the last analysis the fountain of power and the final authority remained in the full assembly of believers.[1]

If it had been otherwise, if the bishops had been chosen by the apostles, and that according to an official and invariable rite, it would be incomprehensible that this office of the episcopate should have been the cause of so many cabals and dissensions in the churches, especially in the early days.[2] On the other hand, nothing is more natural if democracy was at first the rule of primitive Christianity, as everything demonstrates that it was.

The apostles dead, and the original difference between the functions of apostle and bishop once forgotten, it is easy to perceive that men

[1] Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 54, 2. *Cf.* 44, 3, *συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης.* The right of veto, and sometimes of election, still belonged to the full assembly of believers in the time of Cyprian (Epist. 33, 55, 67, 60), and persisted even till the Middle Ages.

[2] Appendix XLIX.

of order would have appealed to some sort of general tradition in which the episcopate was represented as the succession and continuation of the apostolate, and that they would seek to strengthen the former by all the distinction which the latter preserved in the eyes of the new generations. Even more readily will it be perceived that the attempt would have been made, by the end of the first century, to regularise the choice and investiture of the " elders," deacons, and " episcopoi," that they might become the guardians and depositaries of the true doctrine and apostolic tradition.[1]

But two things sufficiently prove that in the time of Clement of Rome and the Pastoral Epistles the theory of apostolic succession was not yet in existence. In the first place we have everywhere to do, not with a single bishop, but with several at a time, who together govern the same community. Therefore the Catholic bishop is not yet there. In the second place, it is very remarkable that Clement of Rome, not content to justify the functions of these episcopoi and deacons by appealing to a too vague apostolic institution, especially invokes the authority of Moses and the prophets, proving by somewhat fantastic reasoning that Isaiah, for instance, predicted and preordained the installation of bishops and deacons in the various Christian parishes.[2]

These phenomena, taken from life and studied at first hand, show how imaginary were the representations of the origins of the episcopate, made a century later. Here again the dogma has hidden history from all eyes.

The second stage of this evolution is represented by the theory of Ignatius concerning the episcopate. This theory differed essentially from that which was later to triumph; it was higher and more religious, but by that very fact less apt to serve in a juridical argument in the discussions of the time.

[1] Tit. i. 5-10; 2 Tim. ii. 1, 2; 1 Tim. v. 22, iv. 14, etc.

[2] Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 42, 5; *Ibid.*, 43; miraculous designation of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, according to Numbers xvii.

The bishop of Ignatius is still a simple local bishop, if I may so speak; a bishop whose mission it is to realise and represent the unity of the parish over which he presides. This person is the hearthstone around which is concentrated the inner life of the community.

In the Relevation of St. John an angel appears at the head of each of the seven churches of Asia, to whom the seer writes in the name of the Lord. This guardian angel is the very genius of each church. Well, the bishop of Ignatius is this angel in flesh and blood, thenceforth incarnated in the person of the head, who, before the world and before God, represents the entire community.[1]

Ignatius mentally contemplates a divine and ideal type of church, a heavenly type which was once realised upon earth during the historic life of the Christ. At that moment of perfection there was a living centre in the Messianic community, the person of Christ; around him the college of apostles, and finally, in the third rank, the circle of believers. This was the primitive type which each distinct Christian group ought to try to reproduce. In the centre, the bishop who holds the place of Christ, or of God; then the presbytery, which represents the apostle, then the assembly of Christian believers. Not the bishop, but the presbytery, is here the successor and heir of the apostolate.[2]

However high Ignatius may place the mystic personality of the bishop, it must not be overlooked that the community itself still remained, as in the earlier time, the basis and starting point of his ecclesiastical conception. So long as this is the case the bishop emerges from the community and is not yet essentially different from the "elders," above whom he stands while still belonging to them, as the elders still draw their life from the church which chose them and which they direct. The bishop is the representative of Christ and for the time stands in his place, but he is not the Christ; the elders are the representatives of the apostles, they are not the apostles. It is the allegorical and religious relation of the type and the antitype, and in no respects prevents bishops

[1] Rev. ii. 1 ff. [2] Appendix L.

and elders from still belonging to the community from which they arose, and being, so to speak, its emanation and elect delegation. But evidently we have reached a critical moment. One step farther and all will be changed.

The change will consist in this: that the bishop, instead of representing the particular community, will become to it the representative and organ of the unity and the tradition of the universal Church. This figure of a Catholic church, inheriting the truth and guarding it against error, rises at this time like a lighthouse from amidst the tempest and confusion provoked by the unloosing of all the heresies. For this universal church is to the local churches what the general is to the particular, what the whole is to the divers parts which compose it. Necessarily the latter are subordinated to the former. If the bishop represents Catholic unity and verity, the particular communities are in this unity and verity, they remain in communion with the universal Church, only so far as they are in communion with their bishop. It is by him alone that they can be what they are, vital parts of the whole, faithful members of the body of Christ. Thenceforth all former relations are utterly changed. Neither the bishop's origin nor his reason for being is found in his particular community, but in the Catholic Church, whose representative and organ he has become toward those over whom he is set. He no longer depends in any degree upon his community; his community depends upon him. Thus for the first time we have the Catholic Church before us, and the evolution whose phases we have followed has reached its termination.

The sense in which the theory of Ignatius was modified now becomes clear. For his mystical conception has been substituted a realistic conception, capable of putting upon a legal basis the right of the episcopate to govern the Church and decree its faith. According to it the Christ continues to direct the universal Church by the apostolic college. The tradition of the apostles founds Catholic unity. To preserve this tradition and make it dominant the bishops must be their legitimate heirs and

successors. Thus apostolical succession, guaranteed by official ordination, becomes the real foundation of the authority of the bishops. The "elders" whom Ignatius here introduces have no business here. They are a subsidiary and embarrassing element, and will disappear by preterition. The line of inheritance becomes more direct and visible, from God to Christ, from Christ to the apostles, from the apostles to the bishops, their legitimate successors. Such is the eminently practical simplification undergone by the episcopal theory in the middle of the second century, as we find it in the writings of Irenæus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian.

Three profound crises, three furious conflicts followed by three victories, brought about this triumph and glorification of the episcopate.

From the crisis of Gnosticism the bishop emerges all-powerful, as depository and custodian of the rule of faith called apostolic. He is the principle of Catholic unity: he judges sovereignly of the value of doctrines and doctors, like the apostles themselves.

The struggle against Montanism brings him new victories and new conquests. The new prophets represented the primitive liberty and divine inspiration. They proclaimed the reign of the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit. They said that the Spirit of God blows ever where it will and cannot be bound by the official interests of the Church. The religious revival which they preached could not close the eyes of the bishops, men of order and tradition, to the danger of such a movement. In these free inspirations their authority encountered an obstacle and a limit. The new prophets were not backward in offering strong opposition to the administration of the bishops—their connivance with the sins and bad morals of the Christians of the time, their too ready absolutions, their complaisant relations with a corrupt world about to be consumed by the fires of divine wrath. Montanism was the aftermath of the spirit and piety of the first Christian generation, but it came too late. It encountered an established discipline and an organised hierarchy. The bishops had already brought into subjection the learned men who till

then had been free; they bent to their control the prophets too. To the monopoly of authentic tradition they added that of the true inspiration. Thenceforth the bishops, like the apostles whose ministry they continued, became the highest organs of the Spirit. That it might no longer be lawful or possible to oppose inspiration to established authority, inspiration was made dependent upon authority, and its channels restricted to the hierarchy.

So with regard to the right to bind and to loose, the *jus solvendi et ligandi*, which the rigorists denied to them, was it not a part of the most express attributes of the apostolate? Did not the Christ give it to his apostles, and therefore did it not revert to their successors the bishops, with all the rest of their heritage? In vain did Tertullian, Hippolytus, Novatian, raise indignant protests against the too complaisant practices of a Zephyrinus, a Callixtus, or a Cornelius; they must therefore yield to the inevitable consequences of the principle which they had themselves laid down in the heat of the battle against the Gnostics.

The Gnostic doctors being conquered, the prophets of Montanism excommunicated or subdued, it was the turn of the martyrs.

They had taken advantage of the moral authority which had become theirs through their faith, their sufferings, and the distinction with which popular veneration endowed them, to encroach upon episcopal privileges, pardoning sins, reinstating apostles, imposing their will upon the priest and the brethren.[1] It was an added check to the official monopoly of the episcopate opposed by individual moral authority. But it also soon disappeared.

Every remnant of opposition finally vanished in the controversies which convulsed the churches of Rome and Africa, especially during the first half of the third century, of which divers points of ecclesiastical discipline were by turns the object. There were reciprocal excommunications, persistent schisms. The life of Cyprian is full of perplexities with regard to backsliders (*lapsi*), the baptism of heretics, and the punishment of grave sins.

[1] Appendix LI.

Once again, as when confronting Montanism, the episcopate was forced to yield to the weight of Christian sentiment. It pronounced in favour of a liberal and tolerant discipline against the excessive severity of Novatian and his partisans, and by this accommodation retained its sovereignty in the Church.

Thus by a slow and laborious progress, through conflicts and protests numberless, these rights and graces which in the beginning were the inalienable possession of the entire community were accumulated and concentrated in a few: the right of permanent rule and final sentence, the right to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice to God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the power of admission to the community of the brethren, and of expulsion therefrom. The common property of the entire body of believers had become the exclusive monopoly of the clergy. The Episcopate, as said Hippolytus, is not only the continuation of the Apostolate, but the inheritor of all its supernatural endowments, maintaining its superior authority in living exercise in the Church through all generations.[1] The edifice is completed, the keystone of the arch has been put in position. Its strong framework rests secure. The genius of Rome was its architect, and when it builds it is for the long future.[2]

VI

The Theory of Cyprian

CATHEDRA PETRI

The theorist of the Catholic Episcopate was Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage.[3] Neither Irenæus nor Tertullian had pressed the idea to its ultimate consequences. They had made the bishops the witnesses and custodians of the tradition, but they were willing to concede to them only the historic mission of serving as intermediaries between the apostles and the churches of their day.

With Irenæus the teachings of the bishops still found their pattern

[1] Hipp., "Phil.," Præf., 4, 52 f. [2] Appendix LII. [3] A. D. 248 to 256.

and verification in the Holy Scriptures. Tertullian on his side pointed out that the bishops were not the equals of the apostles; they had not inherited the apostolic gifts of prophecy and inspiration, nor the gift of miracles, nor the power of remitting or retaining sins. Religion still remained ideal in its essence and transcendent in its relations to the hierarchy, but these were scruples cherished only by men of sufficient education to have some knowledge of the things of a vanished past. The logic of facts was soon to do away with these last obstacles. In fact they disappeared fifty years later in Cyprian's definitive theory.

In this theory the bishops were not the mere historic witnesses of the apostolic tradition, they were themselves that tradition, alive and in continual exercise in the Church of God. The apostolic college ever lived in the body of bishops, self-propagating, self-perpetuating, armed with apostolic authority, endowed with apostolic inspiration, enjoying apostolic privileges, and, like the apostles, sovereignly distributing divine graces.[1] The Episcopate was what it was by virtue of the Spirit of God, whose plenary abode it was, and who by it was manifest and active in the universal Church. The same Spirit individualised himself in each bishop and manifested himself identically in their plurality. The Episcopate was a supernatural organism, each member of which reproduced in himself the unity and the totality of the entire body.[2]

This being the case, no bishop is superior or inferior to another bishop. No one can give or receive orders from his equals. In Cyprian's system there is no place for a universal bishop, for an *episcopus episcoporum*. The highest authority in the Church can only reside in the assembly, the deliberative council, of all the bishops in that Christian and Catholic senate which is known as a council.[3]

Nevertheless, such is the interior logic of the system that at the very moment when Cyprian was labouring to define and hedge it up, he him-

[1] Cyprian, Epist. xxxiii. 1, lxvi. 8, iii. 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, 73, 7, 9; 48, 3, 66, 9, etc.; lv. 20; "De Unit. Eccl.," 5.
[3] *Idem*, Epist. lv. 17.

self dropped into it the germ of a new evolution which should cause to issue from the body of bishops that head of the Episcopate, that bishop of bishops, from whom he was endeavouring to protect it. In fact, Cyprian gave this body a head. Episcopal unity has a central point, a focus whence emanate its rays. Thus it was in the apostolic college. No doubt each apostle, in himself, was what Peter was. Their privileges were the same, their authority equal. But that unity may be manifest it must have a centre whence to radiate. Peter was the starting-point of the unity of the Church, and, since from the beginning his seat had been in Rome, the Roman Church was the principal church in which to seek the unity of the Catholic priesthood. Cyprian, it is true, understood the primacy of the bishop of Rome in a purely honourific and symbolic sense. It was a *primus inter pares.* We know with what vigour he checked the pretensions of Bishop Stephen, who arrogated to himself the right to give laws, in the name of Peter, to the other bishops and to the Church at large. But what availed these tardy reservations? They were no more than straws thrown across a current which thenceforth nothing could check.

That befell Tertullian, Cyprian, and the entire African Church in that early age, which in our own time befell the liberal ultramontane school of Montalembert and Lacordaire in face of the dogma of the personal infallibility of the Pope. All were carried away, in spite of their resistance, by the irrresistible logic of the movement which they themselves had created, but which they were impotent either to direct or to restrain.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PAPACY

I

The Formative Law of the Catholic Hierarchy

The internal structure of the Catholic hierarchy has the regularity and symmetry of a work of nature. One might think it a gigantic phenomenon of crystallisation, in which the same forms had been reproduced in every step of the process, from the first molecule to the entire mass. In the whole system a sort of rhythm reigns, and the same law explains its entire constitution.

Take the initial cell, that is to say, the independent parish, the local church of the time of Ignatius; you will find there the outline of a rudimentary hierarchy with its three constituent elements; at the base, the Christian community; above that the presbyterate, and, issuing from the presbyterate like a bud from the end of its stalk, "the bishop, who is to become the head of the community." In the second stage, the time of Cyprian, the same phenomenon is repeated in the great body of organised Catholicism, and a like hierarchy is in process of establishment. In fact, what is this great ecumenical church, if not a single vast parish analogous to the primitive community? What the presbyterate or the eldership was for the former, the body of bishops is for the latter. It is a great Christian Republic, having at its head a sort of Senate, of whom the bishops are by equal title the Conscript Fathers. Again history will repeat itself, and that will be seen in religion which had already been seen in the domain of politics, when the patrician republic of Rome made way for the monarchy of the Cæsars.

In that plurality of bishops, all equal among themselves, external unity was maintained by unity of spirit, of faith, and of feeling, just

as formerly in the presbyterate of the Catholic churches. But Catholicism has never been content with a moral, spiritual, invisible unity. For it religious unity must be translated and realised in unity of ecclesiastical administration, in the legal subordination of its members to a visible head, whose function it is to give impulse and direction to the entire body. The same law which produced the local bishop of a parish in the time of Ignatius must produce the universal bishop in the ecumenical Church. As the first came out from the ranks of the *presbyteroi* to whom he at first belonged, to sum up in himself the presbyterate and become the senior of *seniores*, so the second came out from the body of bishops to become bishop of bishops, to sum up the episcopate in a single person, and contain in himself the soul of all Catholicism.

This second evolution, which completed the Catholic hierarchical system, was infinitely longer and more stormy than the other, as it carried with it consequences more opposed to the true spirit of Christianity and more menacing to the life of modern society and the independence of the civil power. But the logic of the Catholic notion of the unity of the Church, the gradual lowering of the light and energy of conscience, the cataclysm in the Orient brought about by the invasion of the barbarians, the organisation of the new feudal society, the diplomacy of Roman bishops, persisting through the centuries and under all circumstances in the pursuit of a single aim, the co-operation which it found, now in the ambitions of princes and now in the revolts of peoples, all these wrought together for twelve centuries to build up and maintain the power, at once religious and political, of the bishops of Rome. It has been said that it was an empire "not less visible and palpable than the Republic of Venice or the Kingdom of France." In fact its history resembles that of all political powers, its remote and humble origin is of like nature, and it has had its periods of prodigious growth and its periods of humiliation and decline. As the Kingdom of France had its Clovis and Charlemagne, the papacy had its Leo I. and Gregory the Great. The sluggard kings of the first and second races reflect less

shame upon them than the Popes of the ninth century, which has been called the age of the Roman pornocracy.

And as France was well-nigh shipwrecked in the Hundred Years' War, so the papacy well-nigh perished during the "captivity of Babylon." It is the same succession of victories and defeats, the same play of concurrent forces, and this being so, why should not its history be studied by the same methods, and explained in the same way?

It was the entirely natural result of the movement toward concentration which had been going on in the Church for a century, when from the oligarchical body of bishops in Cyprian's time a single bishop attempted to raise himself above the others and become the centre and head of Christendom. That the bishop who thus suddenly became predominant should be he of Rome was the still more natural result of the part played in history by the city which had conquered the world and become the metropolis of the Empire. Since Christianity was becoming the religion of the empire, ought not Rome to be the capital of Christendom? And it is entirely conceivable that the universal bishop, elevated to a pedestal formed by the fall of all else under the barbarian invasion, should aspire to universal rule; that such men as Gregory VII and Innocent III should dream of theocracy, as it is also to be understood how this dream miscarried, and how the political power of the Popes, after reaching its apogee, should from that point begin to weaken and decline.

None the less is the papacy, that is, the empire held by the Bishop of Rome over the Western world for fifteen centuries, one of the most surprising phenomena of history. The fortunes of Rome in ancient times, and the empire of the Cæsars, are much less surprising, but the three forms of government, Republican senate, imperial monarchy, and papacy, are closely interlinked, and are explained by this alliance. We have here nothing other than the three acts of a single drama, three successive periods in the amazing history of the city which, long before Christianity arose, was called by the people the Sacred and Eternal City.

The world abides only by reason of change, and for this reason eternity is promised to no institution or social form. Untiringly does time raise up each and cast it down again.

The Church, it is true, could not be content with a natural explanation of the papacy and its fortunes. She claimed divine institution and supernatural privileges of such a nature as would secure the chair of St. Peter and his successors from the common lot of all earthly thrones. There is nothing surprising in this claim; until the rise of government by popular suffrage, receiving rights and powers from the people, it was common to all monarchies of ancient and modern times.

Those fables and prophecies which almost always follow the event are the decorations of ancient edifices, not their foundations. Legend follows, it does not create, established power. To maintain its theory the Church was unconsciously led not only to forget the real evolution of the facts, but also to reverse their order, and put in the first place those which happened last. If any one historic fact is certain it is that the bishop did not appear until the completion of the evolution of the presbyterate, and that the Pope appeared at the close of that of the episcopate.

The Vatican places the instituting of the papacy by Christ earlier than all the rest. According to its teaching, the institution preceded the Church itself by the personal choice of Peter as chief of the Apostles and Vicar of Christ; so that, far from being the final term of the evolution of primitive Christianity, the papacy, according to it, is its true beginning, the source whence all things originally flowed, as well for the apostles and bishops themselves as for the Church at large.[1] The magic spell of dogma and the accommodating imagination of faith are continually leading uncritical minds into like anachronisms. It needs only to study the authorities in their chronological order to discover the true succession of events.

[1] Act. Conc. Vat., "Constitutio Pastor Æternus," of July 8, 1870.

II

The Share of Rome in the Origin of the Papacy

THE epithet "Roman" has become so firmly attached to Catholicism in speech and opinion as to have become inseparable from it. The share of Rome, so large in the formation of the Catholic Church, was yet more decisive in the constitution of the papacy.[1]

In the first period, not the bishop, but the Church of Rome herself, as a Christian collectivity, represented by the council of her "elders," intervened in outside matters, and performed an office of assistance, arbitrage, and guidance toward her sister communities. Let no one say that it was the bishop who gave her this important function; on the contrary it was she who, when at last she had a bishop, gave him that preponderating authority over the others which he very soon began to exercise.[2] We say advisedly "when at last she had one," for she was a long time without any. There was no bishop in Rome when the Apostle Paul addressed to it his great Epistle in the year 58 or 59, although the Church was already old enough to attract general attention and to have more or less well organised ecclesiastical offices.[3] Nor had it one fifty years later, when the Roman community by the pen of Clement sent wise counsel and vigorous exhortations to that of Corinth.[4]

The letter of Ignatius to the Romans and the first revelations of Hermas, recorded in the "Pastor," bear witness that in the reign of Trajan and the early years of Hadrian the Church of Rome was still living under presbyterial rule.[5] What, then, gave it that influence and authority of which it was already possessed?

[1] *Vide supra,* the chapter on the Church.

[2] The letter of Clement of Rome is anonymous; it is the Church of Rome writing to that of Corinth. In like manner Ignatius writes to the Roman community without making the slightest mention of the bishop, whether in the superscription or the body of the letter.

[3] Rom. i. 1, 6, xii. 4, 9.

[4] Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. i. 44, etc.

[5] Ignatius, "Epist. ad Rom.," entire; Hermas, "Pastor," Vis. ii. 2, 4, iii. 9; Mand. xi.

The fact is self-explicable. Only those need be surprised by it, and seek for miracle or mystery to account for it, who are unable to picture to themselves, or can only vaguely imagine, the social condition of the world under the Antonines, the part played in it by Rome, the sacrosanct city, the trammels of political, economic, and moral subordination by which even the remotest parts of the empire were bound to this all-powerful centre. Reduced to the condition of provinces by the habit of long obedience, all the nationalities of the empire looked for their law, their rights, to the city upon the Seven Hills. Rome was then at the apogee of her greatness. How should not her prestige, her authority, her power of attraction, have passed from the political to the religious order?

The Church modelled her forms and her organisation on those of the empire. The logic of social phenomena is the same in all domains.

Representatives of all the peoples of the world flocked to Rome. It was an epitome of the empire. Christians of every race, from Orient and Occident, met there in the communion of the same worship, and this medley, this agglomeration, made this Church, as it were, the nucleus and summary of all Christendom. She alone had this ecumenical character, and while all the others were shut up in a more or less circumscribed region, she had ties and uninterrupted relations with all parts of the universe.

In addition she was much more considerable by the number of her members, wealth, and influence, and she generously put all her resources at the service of the other churches. Since Jerusalem was gone, what other city could have contended with her for pre-eminence? As Rome was the political capital of the empire, so was the Church of Rome the religious capital of Christendom. A marvellous spirit of government animated her, and seemed hereditary in her. She was considered as the elder sister of the other communities. Elder sisters naturally feel maternal anxieties and take on maternal ways. They hold themselves

responsible for the younger and weaker members of the family; they easily arrogate to themselves the right of guardianship and direction. Rome apprehended this mission from the beginning, accepted it, and accomplished it in a manner as admirable as it was touching. To do this she had only to obey the inspiration of Christian love and the sentiment of fraternal unity. Dionysius of Corinth, writing to the Romans in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, bears the noble testimony which the entire history of the second century confirms: "It has been your custom from the beginning to succour your brethren in a thousand ways, and to sustain with your gifts a great number of distant churches, being zealous as you are, O Romans, thus to continue the tradition of the Romans, your fathers."

At the same time it was Rome who, in the name of all Christendom, was carrying on the battle against Gnosticism and upholding the true doctrine. She was not apt to be embarrassed by speculative theories. Her concern was not to find arguments, but to set up barriers and impose laws. She gave the other churches the efficient weapon, with the secret of its use. In Rome the first form of the apostolic symbol was drawn up, and soon became the charter and the bond of Catholic orthodoxy. Again it was Rome who put an end to the vacillations and controversies of the Eastern churches touching the canonical books, and determined the almost final form of the New Testament collection, which had now become the sacred book of Christians. And finally, in Rome were wrought out the earliest lists of the episcopal successions and the earliest constitutions or rules of ecclesiastical laws.[1]

It is impossible too greatly to admire the order and energy which the Roman Church brought to this common work of defence, organisation, and propaganda.

At the same time human weakness also appears. The sacredness of the end pursued diverted attention from the character of the means employed. The Roman genius was never troubled with scruples. Politics, with its ambiguities and ingenuity, early found a place in the councils

[1] Appendix LIII.

of the Church of Rome. The last quarter of the second century and the first half of the third were a period of incredible fecundity in legend, imposture, and apocryphal literature in general. Lists of bishops, apocryphal acts, apostolic romances, trophies of martyrs, places of pilgrimage, an efflorescence of marvellous tales, an appetite for fables, an excessive credulity, corresponded in the Christian world with the recrudescence of superstition which raged in the pagan world in the time of Severus. Having reconciled in its convenient orthodoxy the tendencies of Peter and Paul, the Church of Rome was able to add the distinction of these two great apostolic names to that of the capital city of the world. This crowning work of her politics laid the foundation of her future ecclesiastical supremacy, and, as Renan said, "The papacy has in its cradle a mythical duality far more glorious than that of Romulus and Remus." [1]

Such is the pedestal which the course of things erected in advance for the Bishop of Rome. It was natural that the latter should inherit the pre-eminence which first accrued to the Church. But it was not done in a day. It was a sufficiently long evolution, the stages of which may be noted.

At the close of the first century, in the time of Clement, there were as yet no bishops in Rome, simply *presbyteri* or *hegoumenoi*, among whom were distributed the various ecclesiastical functions. Toward the middle of the century the order changed. Anicetus was governing the Church with a truly episcopal authority. At this time the aged Polycarp of Smyrna made the journey to Rome to confer with Anicetus on the subject of Easter. The churches of Asia and that of Rome followed differing customs in the celebration of the festival, and referred back to two equally venerable, but contradictory, traditions. The step taken by Polycarp proves without gainsaying the price which the churches of Asia were willing to pay to remain in communion with that of Rome. But the fraternal and tolerant attitude of Anicetus proves no less that he did not deem himself to have the right or authority to impose any-

[1] Renan, "Marc-Aurèle," p. 70.

thing upon his colleagues, least of all upon the illustrious Bishop of Smyrna. The bishops were still upon a footing of the most perfect equality. Harmony could not be reached. Each maintained his right; but they partook of the Communion together and the reciprocal autonomy of the churches was recognised and accepted.[1]

Half a century later the same discussion recurred, but in the interval the claims of the Bishop of Rome had increased. Victor does not imitate Anicetus. He seeks to close the controversy by an act of authority. In 194 he issues an imperious edict which "cuts off from Catholic communion and declares heretic all the churches of Asia or elsewhere who follow not the Roman custom in the matter of Easter." The date should be noted; it is the true birthday of the papacy.

For the first time a bishop of Rome speaks with authority to the other bishops, and makes himself the interpreter and arbiter of the universal Church. Victor acts in the case as universal bishop, and proclaims those churches heretical which resist his authority. From this time everything grows simple. The note of the truth is no longer in the doctrine, but in the external attitude which one may take toward Rome. To be submissive to her is the mark of orthodoxy; that of heresy is to be separated from her.

Such a *coup d'état* could not pass without a protest. Polycrates of Ephesus and the other bishops of Asia were not alone in repelling so unheard of a claim.[2] Irenæus, though he held to the Roman custom, condemned Victor's intolerance. In his eyes a simple question of rite could not justify this abuse of power nor break the unity of the faith.[3]

But the way had been opened. The example given by Victor would be followed by his successors. We must take note of the protests that arose, because they demonstrate the novelty of the claims of the Bishop

[1] Irenæus, Letter to Victor in Eusebius, H. E., V. 24, 11 ff., IV. 26, 3; and Jerome, "De Viris," III. 17, etc.

[2] Appendix LIV.

[3] Appendix LV.

of Rome; but we must also inquire why protest was doomed to be powerless in the long run. Those who uttered it seemed not to be aware that they themselves, in their theory of the episcopate, had posited the premisses of the thesis which later they resisted.

If bishops are the successors of the apostles and heirs to their rights and privileges, is not he of Rome, who is the successor of Peter, heir also to his primacy? Here is a detail worth noticing. It was at this time, under Victor or Calixtus, that Roman exegesis for the first time applied to the successors of Peter the celebrated passage of Scripture, *Tu es Petrus*, and drew from it unanticipated conclusions in favour of their supreme authority. In vain does Tertullian indignantly protest against such an interpretation; in vain, with cutting irony, does he mock at the pretentious and even pagan titles already paraded by the bishops of Rome; he has come too late; in his turn he becomes the victim of the too convenient theory invented by himself to close the mouths of heretics; a *prescriptum* is issued against him.[1]

To form a just idea of the situation in Rome at the end of the second century, we must read in the "Philosophoumena" of Hippolytus the picture of the ecclesiastical crisis the Church was then passing through, as much with regard to Christological doctrine as to discipline. It is difficult to imagine a longer or more violent conflict than that between Hippolytus and Calixtus.[2] Nothing better displays both the animation and the futility of the oppositions encountered by the papacy at its very birth.

The third century was filled with conflicts evoked by the same imperious claims of the Roman bishops, now on one point, now on another. Episcopal equality as formulated by Cyprian was at that time the common and consecrated doctrine of the Church. Every act of authority exercised by Rome was acutely felt and judged as an act of usurpation and tyranny.

The most notable and significant of these conflicts was that which

[1] Tertullian, "De Pudic.," 1. [2] Hippolytus, "Philosophoumena," ix.

broke out about the year 250 between Stephen of Rome and Cyprian of Carthage on the subject of the baptism of heretics. Cyprian desired a friendly and peaceful solution; Stephen insisted upon his own, by virtue of his prerogative as successor of Peter, and he issued a decree of excommunication against all who should not submit. Cyprian taxed this proceeding as an intolerable abuse. Two councils held at Carthage ranged themselves on his side. Most of the Eastern bishops, with Dionysius of Alexandria at their head, took a position against Stephen. It was, as it were, a league of almost the entire episcopate, who felt themselves menaced in their rights and their independence.

Especially important is the letter of Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea. Nothing more incisive has ever been written against Roman autocracy. "Stephen does not blush to call Cyprian a false Christian, a false apostle, an artisan of deceit and falsehood. With the consciousness of being himself all that, he takes the initiative and throws into the other's face falsely that which he deserves to have said of himself. . . Righteous indignation seizes me in the presence of such overt and manifest stupidity in the case of one who thus glorifies himself instead of his episcopate, who insists that he possesses the heritage of Peter, upon whom rest the foundations of the Church, when he is himself overthrowing its foundations." Addressing himself more directly to Stephen, he adds: "What grave sin hast thou not brought upon thy head by separating thyself as thou hast done from so many churches! Deceive not thyself; in seeking to shut out others thou hast shut thyself out. The real apostate is he who thus cuts himself off from the communion and unity of the universal Church. Thinking to excummunicate others, thou hast excommunicated thyself." Thus could an orthodox bishop write to his colleague of Rome in the times when the claims of the latter to the universal episcopate were beginning to assert themselves.[1]

These remonstrances reveal no less the tenacity with which the bishops of Rome appealed to their prerogative as successors of Peter. As no

[1] Among the Epistles of Cyprian, No. 75. *c.* 25. See, also, chaps. 2 to 6.

one doubted the fact of this succession nor contested their inheritance, nothing is more natural than that men like Victor, Calixtus, Stephen, should have drawn from their position the practical consequences which redounded to the advantage, not of their persons, but of their Sees. Their divine delegation bound their consciences even more than it flattered their ambition. Their exegesis and history had neither more nor less value than that employed by Cyprian as the foundation of his theory of the episcopate. They employed it with more logic, but with no less sincerity.

To justify this jurisdiction of a universal episcopate they could not rest satisfied with invoking, as concerning the other bishops, the historic importance of the city of Rome. They had need to find in Catholic tradition a more specifically Christian title to their claim. The legend of the *Cathedra Petri*, generally accredited from about this time, met their wish half-way. It was the fictitious title needed to justify the real cause of their pre-eminence. How this legend, which was the fruit and not the cause of the evolution of the Church, had been progressively formed, and how in the end it imposed itself upon the whole Catholic Church, a mere chronological view of the texts relating to it will show.

III

The Legend of St. Peter's Chair

At the close of the second century the legend of Peter is still far from being simple and uniform. It has two branches which are not only distinct, but contradictory; the more or less Judaising Ebionite branch, represented by the curious romance of the "Clementine Homilies," and the orthodox Catholic branch represented by the Roman tradition, the theories of Irenæus and Tertullian and the "Acta Petri et Pauli." That which essentially distinguishes the two traditions is the part played in them by the Apostle Paul, and the way in which his person and work are represented. In the first Paul is the "enemy man," the rebellious heretic, the

adversary of Christ, of his apostles, of Peter in particular.[1] He is depicted and stigmatised in the lineaments of Simon the Magician, the father of all the heresies of the time; and it would appear that all Peter's travels are undertaken only to oppose and unmask him and finally to put him to confusion. On the contrary, in the Catholic legend, Peter and Paul are in perfect harmony, they both suffer martyrdom at Rome under Nero, and are the object of equal veneration. Little by little, however, this sort of equality ceases; the authority of Peter gains the ascendency, his position is established as prince of the Apostles. Paul becomes his humble and docile auxiliary. The chair of Peter, established in Rome, becomes the centre of Christendom and the arbiter of all controversies.

In these two legends the proportion of fiction is almost equal. Having the same historic starting point, they grew side by side in the service of opposite parties. That one triumphed over the other is because the interests which it served became dominant in the Church, and eventually became dominant in history.

The oldest and most authentic document concerning the true relations of Peter and Paul is the Epistle to the Galatians, written at latest in the year 56 of our era. Two forms of Christianity then confronted one another: Jewish Christianity, with Peter, James, and John, the pillars of the Church, at its head, which remained strictly faithful to the Mosaic observances; and a Christianity of Gentile origin, the fruit of the missions of Barnabas and Paul. Jerusalem was the capital of the first, Antioch the metropolis of the second.

To restrain the zeal of certain Christians of the Pharisaic sect and prevent a schism, conferences were held in Jerusalem. In them Peter represented the "Gospel of the circumcision," Paul, that "of the uncircumcision." Harmony was maintained, but each remained faithful to his mission and to the method adapted to it.[2]

The mind of Peter appears to have been narrower and more timid

[1] "Hom. Clementis," "Ep. Petri": ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος, ὁ ἀντικείμενος.

[2] Acts ii. 46, iii. 1, v. 42, x. 9, xxi. 23, xxii. 12; Gal. ii. 1-9, v. 2; Acts xv. 1 ff., xiii. 1 ff.

than his heart. A man of impulse, he often fell into inconsistency. He gave a new example of this weakness of character during a visit which he made at Antioch. Paul's account of it is well known: "*I resisted him* to his face," he said, "because he stood condemned. For before that certain men had come from James he had communicated [1] with the Gentile Christians; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision. And the rest of the Jewish Christians dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with this dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" etc.[2] We are not told what was Peter's reply, but we have one which a century later was attributed to him by the Ebionites. "I am the firm rock," he said, "the corner-stone of the Church against which thou, by resisting me, art in revolt. If thou wert not an enemy, thou wouldst not go about everywhere calumniating me. . . When thou sayest that I am *to be blamed*, thou accusest God himself who revealed his Christ to me: thou accusest Jesus, who called me blessed for having received this revelation. If, then, thou wilt indeed labour with me in the cause of the truth, first learn from us what we have learned from him, and, when thou hast become a disciple of the truth, then thou mayest be our co-worker."

Here we see what an abiding impression these conflicts made upon the Judaising Christians even into the second century; and how unlike the apostles actually were to the church-window figures by which tradition loves to picture them. The Epistle to the Galatians is not the sole witness to these divergencies and disagreements. The one that bears the name of James, the origin of which is so obscure, brings no less emphatic witness to a resolute polemic against Paul and his formula of justifica-

[1] So the French, and so the significance of the Greek, *συνήσθιεν*.—*Trans.*
[2] Gal. ii. 11 ff.

tion by faith. The Revelation of John shows only twelve apostles, and seems to exclude a thirteenth. The new Jerusalem, the Church, has twelve gates and twelve foundations, upon which are written only the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Finally, in the way in which certain sayings of Jesus are brought together in the first Gospel, it is difficult not to feel a special point made against Paul and his doctrine, while Luke, on the other hand, not less evidently manifests an intention to obliterate all such marks and reconcile all adversaries.[1]

Yet, though there was not perfect harmony in the first age, the unity was never broken. Men may have parted in bad temper, but they came together again with pleasure. The apostles had a common basis of faith upon which, after the most violent storms, they still found themselves in agreement: the Messiahship of Jesus, belief in his resurrection, the expectation of his glorious return. In the letters to the Corinthians and Romans, Paul's attitude toward Peter is already most pacific. They had common disciples,[2] and it may be said that the mass of Christian converts, unable to rest in either extreme, moved between the two and tended to reconcile them, whether they would or not, in a comprehensive rule of faith, all the more far-reaching for being without special emphasis on either side. This Gentile-Christian Christianity, neither Paulinian nor Judaising, formed the first course in the structure of Catholicism. All the literature to which it gave birth, Luke's writings being its masterpieces, tended to effect this work of common edification, of conciliation and peace.

The equilibrium so accurately maintained between Peter and Paul in the book of the Acts of the Apostles (about the years 85 to 90), and which is still preserved in the short twofold notice of Clement of Rome, clearly reveals the dominant solicitude of the Church at the

[1] James ii; Rev. xxi. 12-15; Matt. v. 19; especially the words *καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτως τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν.* Luke xv. 12-32; xviii. 14; v. 1-10.

[2] Tradition connects Mark and Silvanus, by turns, with Peter and with Paul. Barnabas is the connecting link.

close of the first century.[1] Memories of the primitive period were already being transfigured behind the golden haze that has ever since modified them. The two Catholic Epistles ascribed to Peter contribute to the same end. The first, which is not only of a fine Paulinian inspiration, but is intimately related to the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians, appears to propose by the intermediary of Silvanus to recommend the former apostle of the circumcision, now become also an apostle to the Gentiles, to the Paulinian communities of Asia Minor. In return, Peter in his Second Epistle gives a formal certificate of orthodoxy and canonicity to the letters of Paul, of whom many are suspicious.[2]

On the other hand, Ignatius speaks of Peter and Paul as two authorities equally received by Roman Christians,[3] and Dionysius of Corinth, oblivious of history and of all former rivalry between the two apostles or their partisans, represents them as the joint founders of the church of Corinth.

The apocryphal "Acts of Peter and Paul," correcting the Ebionite legend, detach the latter from the person of Simon the Magician, make him the lieutenant of Peter, and picture the two as exchanging singularly artificial mutual attestations of orthodoxy and fidelity.[4] The work of reconciliation is complete by the end of the second century. Rome claims the glory of their martyrdom and their apostolate, from which the Roman Church and the bishops derive their chief title to authority.

From this time forth the legend of Peter undergoes a new development; it rises above that of Paul, becomes more luxuriant, and finally entirely dominates and overshadows it. Paul, the apostle of subjective inspiration and Christian liberty, is difficult to adapt to the designs of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The legend of Peter, on the contrary,

[1] Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 5. In this comparison, as in that of the Acts, the part of Paul still remains the larger and more brilliant of the two.

[2] 1 Pet. iv. 12, especially the strange expression, ὡς λογίζομαι; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

[3] Ad Rom. iv. 3.

[4] "Acti Petri et Pauli," Tischendorf's edit., 60, 62.

naturally became the foundation and justification of the order then in process of establishment. To this end, Peter is supposed to have come very early to Rome—as early as the reign of Claudius. Before even the first missions to the Gentiles had been undertaken he had chosen the capital of the empire to be the capital of the Church. He established his Episcopal See in that city, and there exercised a pontificate of twenty-five years, one month, and nine days. He suffered martyrdom there under Nero, leaving his authority and privileges, with his sovereign See, to the bishops his legitimate successors. As early as the beginning of the third century he had his trophy, his commemorative monument, on the Vatican above the Eternal City; that of Paul was outside the walls, on the road to Ostia; an illustration of the unequal esteem in which Catholicism holds the memory of the two apostles.

If, with some small application of the critical method, we ask what actually were the relations of Peter with the first Christian community of Rome, we learn with surprise that they were almost nothing, and that never was there a vainer glory. The origin of Christianity in Rome is due neither to Peter nor to Paul; it can be traced to no known apostle, to no official mission. When, about the year 58, Paul wrote his great letter to the Romans, the Christian community had already been long in existence, and its faith was proclaimed throughout the whole world. Peter had certainly never been there. About the year 44 we find him in prison in Jerusalem. Five or six years later he is still in that city and present at the conferences then held there. A little later the Epistle to the Galatians informs us that he was in Antioch. He was not in Rome when Paul arrived there in the spring of the year 61. Nor was he there about the year 63, the date of the Epistle to the Philippians. If he went there a year or two later, if he suffered martyrdom there—which in all rigour we may conclude from the note of Clement of Rome and from the place where the First Epistle of Peter was written—it is a fact of

[1] It is impossible to take seriously the commentators who find in the words, *ἐπορεύθη εἰς ἕτερον τόπον* of Acts xii. 18, the departure of Peter for Rome.

detail, entirely external, which may interest the historian but which has no dogmatic importance.

No connection exists between the foundation of the Church of Rome and the historic person of Peter; there is still less, if possible, between Peter and the Roman Episcopate of the subsequent age. We found, early in our study, one fact which dispenses us from seeking any other. There was no bishop, properly so-called, in Rome before the reign of Hadrian. The Christian community of this city came into existence spontaneously and was organised in all liberty. It had its elders and deacons, that is to say, its directing council or Senate, before the arrival of either Paul or Peter, and it is vain and gratuitous to imagine that the latter effected any change in the established order.[1]

The most mythical part of the legend is the supposed episcopate of Peter. No writer of the early centuries speaks of any such episcopate. It was still too well known that an apostle, whose mission it was to carry the gospel everywhere, could not consent to be bound to any particular place by an ecclesiastical function which was essentially sedentary. Therefore the ancient authors never say anything else than this: "Having founded the Church of Rome the apostles Peter and Paul chose and installed its first bishop."[2] It is not until much later, with intent to articulate the episcopate more closely with the apostolate, that Peter was admitted to the series of bishops as the first link in the mystic chain on which all the other links depended.

During all these long centuries writers have not been able to come to an agreement as to the order of the names of the first successors of Peter. Nothing more clearly proves the legendary character of all the lists which have been drawn up, than their variations and the explanations which have been offered for them. The one which became official in the Catholic Church so became, not because it is more certain, but because ecclesiastic authority imposed it.

In the light of these results of historic criticism let us take up again

[1] Rom. xii. 6-12. [2] Appendix LVI.

and study the celebrated text: "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (Matt. xvi. 18). First of all we note this interesting fact: it did not bear the meaning and dogmatic significance ascribed to it by theologians of the papacy until the third century, precisely when the bishops of Rome found the need of it to sustain their newborn pretensions. Tertullian, the first to make known to us this politically inspired exegesis, strongly opposed it, declaring that the words of Jesus and the privilege they imply regard only the person of Peter and his part as initiator of the first apostolic preaching. It is without the slightest right that the Roman bishops apply it to themselves and their See.[1] Still more independently of all polemic, Origen on his part declares that the promise of Jesus does not refer to the person of Peter, who a little later is called Satan, but to the fact itself of which Peter at that moment was the organ, and upon which the Church was founded.[2] Finally, Cyprian finds in the apostolic primacy of Peter only a symbol and manifestation of the unity of the Church: the Bishop of Rome remains a *primus inter pares*.[3]

It appears, then, that at the very time when this Roman exegesis was being elaborated it gave to contemporaries the impression of novelty. Whatever may be the meaning of this much discussed text, and whatever honour it may reflect upon the apostle Peter, it is clear that little advantage accrues from it historically to the bishops of Rome, once it has been demonstrated that there is no link between themselves and Peter, none between Peter and Rome, and finally, as we shall see, none between Rome and the religious thought of Jesus.

From a religious point of view, Rome is entirely outside of the horizon of Christ. He proclaimed a kingdom which was shortly to come down from heaven. Nothing was more contrary to his conception of the Kingdom of God than the idea of a monarchical church modelled upon the laws of the empire of the Cæsars, with a similar hierarchy and the same

[1] Tertullian, "De Pudic.," 21.
[2] Origen, "Comm. in Mathæum," xvi. 18, vol. xii. 10, ed. of Lommatsch.
[3] Appendix LVII.

capital. He never dreamed of instituting a lieutenant or vicar to succeed himself, and if anyone appears to have held such an office temporarily in the Messianic communities of Palestine, while awaiting the coming of the King, it was James, the brother of the Christ according to the flesh, and certainly not Peter, who appears as subordinate to James, as well in the Epistle to the Galatians and the Acts of the Apostles as in the first tradition of the Ebionites.[1]

Is the text *Tu es Petrus*, in its present form, to be attributed to Jesus? It is more than doubtful. It was not in that first collection of the "Logia of the Lord" which Luke had before him and reproduced in his Gospel. No more does Mark find it among the reminiscences which he collected from the preaching of Peter himself. The Fourth Gospel also omits it, and it may even be said that, perceiving it gradually forming in tradition, the writer tried to efface it by setting the beloved disciple in opposition to Peter. The book of Acts has nothing of it, Paul has no suspicion of it. The Epistles of Peter, the Apocalypse, all the other books of the New Testament, are absolutely ignorant of it. It makes its appearance sixty years after the death of Jesus, in the last redaction of our Gospel of Matthew, which is a compilation of the diverse elements. It is very probable that it owes its existence to an inspiration of Judaising or Ebionite circles, who, after the death of James, desired to oppose Peter's authority to that of Paul. It is the development and transformation in oral tradition of words doubtless spoken by Jesus on the occasion of the change of Simon's name to Cephas. Here we discover the humble source of the legend of Peter, and from this point we can follow it down the course of history, easily tracing its entire development.

IV

First Age of the Papacy—Grandeur and Decadence

Having found the first and effective cause of their pre-eminence in the political importance of the city of Rome, the Roman bishops discovered

[1] Appendix LVIII.

that the divine consecration and assured pledge of their future fortune were equally enfolded in the legend of Peter. Heirs of a twofold antiquity, the past and present glories of the one, the future promises of the other, gave them a natural right to pre-eminence among all other bishops. The rapid conversion of the subjects of the empire exalted ever higher their episcopal throne, which promised soon to stand on a level with the throne of the Cæsars, until the day when, in the West at least, it should occupy its place.

Such a destiny can appear marvellous and supernatural only to those who are incapable of keeping in mind the historic causes which contributed to it. The character and ability of the bishops of Rome, the controversies which rent the Church, and in which with consummate prudence they took part only as arbiters and judges of last resort, the series of catastrophies which caused the downfall of the Western Empire and left the civil power vacant, the rise of the barbarian princes, the veneration of the new peoples who had received from Rome the benefits at once of civilisation and of the faith, all these contributed to the formation of a new power, and the triumph of a religious policy inspired by profound faith, which through many centuries and many vicissitudes never knew failure.

Notwithstanding the obscurity which half envelops them, we may say that the early bishops of Rome were men eminent in ability and practical sense. They seem to have succeeded one another in office only to follow one another to martyrdom. The uniformity of their policy was no less admirable than that of their virtues. While all around them was in decline and decay, their power alone increased unintermittently. It was the one centre of attraction and unity. Its religious character protected it from any individual moral weakness, and it may even be said that it profited as much by the violences and intrigues of the ambitious as by the virtues of the saints. For from the beginning the Roman See was occupied by men of both these characters. Witness that Calixtus whom the Romans canonised, and whose adventurous career has

recently been made known by another saint, the author of the "Philosophoumena." What fraud had first secured, popular credulity made sacred and inviolable.

The conversion of Constantine, which would seem likely to enhance the power of the bishops of Rome, had, in fact, the opposite result. Becoming the head of the Church, he proposed to rule it. It was the Christian emperors, not the Popes of that period, who decided the Catholic faith. Addressing himself to the bishops, Constantine assumed the manner of a bishop. He called himself exterior bishop, instituted by God like the others. Thus, like his pagan predecessors, he united in his person the rights of emperor and of sovereign pontiff. Every other bishop must yield precedence to him. It was Constantine who convoked the Council of Nicæa; he formally opened it and approved and sanctioned its discussions. His successors followed his example. Never was the office of bishop of such small dignity nor his person more overshadowed.[1]

It was the custom of the Oriental church to fix the rank and measure the authority of the episcopal sees according to the political importance of the cities in which they were established. The Occidentals, on the contrary, looked first of all to their apostolic origin and the authority of the apostles who had instituted them. Thus the two could never agree. After the founding of Constantinople the Councils of Chalcedony and of Constantinople decided that the bishop of the new Rome had the same authority as he of the old capital, leaving to the latter a purely honorary primacy. Rome protested against these decisions, but the East always maintained them. Schism was looming up in the future.[2]

It became inevitable with the division of the empire. The unity of the Church had been modelled upon that of the empire of the Cæsars, which united all people in one body subject to its law. But from the

[1] Eusebius, "Vita Const.," IV. 24, I. 44; Mansi, VI. p. 733; Gieseler, I., part 2, p. 181; "Cod. Theod.," XVI. 1, 2; Socrates, "Hist. Eccl.," IV., proem.

[2] Council of Nicæa, Can. 6; Council of Chalcedony, Can. 17, and especially Can. 28. The Council of Constantinople, in 381, Can. 3, decided for the same equality between the old and the new Rome. (*Vide* Mansi, vol. VII. p. 369.)

fourth century two worlds were being formed, differing more and more in genius, language, social customs, and interests. The ancient Roman unity was about to be shattered; its reflection, the unity of the Church, could not long survive it.

Dogmatic dissensions were not the real cause of the rupture. Behind these dissensions a social evolution was obscurely taking place, which was to determine the future of the Christian world as of the political. It is easy to see that with two empires there would be two Churches, each claiming to be orthodox and Catholic. Here was the obstacle to the dream of a universal episcopate, so dear to Rome; and to our own days it has not yet been overcome.

That which limited and weakened the authority of the bishops of Rome in the East had the effect of strengthening and aggrandising it in the West. Rome was the only see in that part of the world which dated back to the apostles. From her Africa, Gaul, Spain, and later Britain and Germany received the Christian faith. The only security for the orthodoxy of the churches of these provinces was in their communion with the Roman Church. The bishops of Rome applied themselves to draw ever more closely the ties which gratitude and respect had first knitted, and every day saw them more successful. In those times of confusion and distress their intervention was often invoked. The Council of Sardis in 349 recognised that bishops condemned in their own provinces had a right to appeal to him of Rome, and that the latter could judge or cause judgment to be given in final appeal.[1] Such is the origin of the custom of appeal to the court of Rome. Than it, nothing more efficiently contributed to extend the Roman jurisdiction and give to the Bishop of Rome, at least in the West, the appearance and authority of a universal bishop.

At this juncture appeared in the See of Rome a man of extraordinary virtue, eloquence, and, above all, political genius. Leo the Great (440 to 462) begins the series of those grand papal figures who must be ranked with the founders of dynasties and leaders of nations. He was, in fact,

[1] Appendix LIX.

the first Pope in history and the true founder of the papacy.[1] In the first place, it was he who defined the theory, that is, the fundamental dogma, of the papacy, and gave it its final formula;[2] in the next, he displayed an incomparable energy of will, clearness of vision, eloquence and diplomacy in transferring theory into fact. By the favour of events, it seemed for a moment that he might realise his dream, and he certainly would have done so had success been possible.[3] Finally, in the political order, in view of the invasion of the barbarians and the collapse of the Empire and institutions, he saw how to bring the newborn papacy before the eyes of a panic-stricken people as the only method of salvation, the sole power capable of protecting them. No doubt it is a legend which shows Attila, the scourge of God, recoiling before Leo I, who came to him in pontifical robes bearing the flaming sword of St. Peter. But this legend none the less expresses with striking truth the confidence of the nation and the mission of protection and salvation, which, in the universal distress, was intrusted to the Church and its head. The vanquished peoples crowded around the Holy See like sheep having no shepherd, and the barbarians stopped short with a sort of religious terror before ceremonies which appealed to their imagination, and a mysterious power against whom their victorious swords were powerless; they found it more profitable to gain over this power to approve of their conquests than to persecute and destroy it. Thus began the long political activity of the Popes, and the theocratic idea was born.

For a brief time the victories of Justinian brought the bishops of Rome once again under tutelage, but this did not last long.[4] They found in the kingdom of the Franks, then rising to eminence in Gaul, both a fulcrum and a weapon by which they might by one act free themselves from the overlordship of Constantinople and the tyranny of the Arian Goths, or later of the Lombards.

[1] Appendix LX. [2] Appendix LXI.

[3] He obtained from Valentinian III. an imperial law by which the authority of the Bishop of Rome over all the Western Churches was formally established.

[4] Appendix LXII.

The alliance became still closer between the family of Charles Martel and the papacy. Pepin and Charlemagne needed the Pope to consecrate their usurpation of the throne: the Pope needed them in order to become an independent sovereign. He gave his benediction and received in exchange that which has ever since been known as "the patrimony of St. Peter."

We must here note the second step in the progress of the theocratic idea, latent in the very institution of the papacy. In the year 800, on Christmas Day, in the basilica of St. Peter, Pope Leo III placed the imperial crown upon the head of the prince of the Franks, amidst the plaudits of the populace, who cried "Long live the emperor Charles Augustus, *whom God himself has crowned!*" Not only did the Pope thus annihilate the pretensions of the Greek emperors of the East, not only did the Roman Pontiff take the attitude of one who held the crown of the Cæsars to confer it upon him who had restored the Empire, but also and above all he stood before the Catholic world as the representative of God, like another Samuel, deposing Saul, crowning David, and possessing the theocratic right to make and unmake kings. The more glorious the power of the new emperor, the more it contributed to exalt the Pope, who seemed to have bestowed it upon him.

Another and a more obscure event no less served the cause of the papacy. This was the successive appearance of several collections of letters or decrees of former bishops of Rome, of which the most celebrated were the false Decretals of the Pseudo-Isidore. A dominant characteristic of this period is the tendency to consider all religious questions as questions of canon law, and to settle them by appeal to ancient authorities which had fixed the rule to be followed and the solution to be adopted in all cases. This series of documents was devised to establish and enrich this jurisprudence; most of them were apocryphal or falsified, attributed to ancient Popes from Clement of Rome to Damasus, and constituting the most colossal and barefaced fraud of which history has to tell. By it the sovereign intervention of the papacy in diocesan affairs, its

most extravagant pretensions, its most recently assumed privileges, were confirmed and justified as the constant teaching of the Church from the beginning. The entire policy of the Popes of the Middle Ages was inspired by these documents; they found in them a support which no one could call in question, an inexhaustible arsenal and a venerable authority before which all resistance was vain.[1] A curious history might be written of the falsifications made in the interests of the papacy all through its history. Authentic documents were interpolated, false ones fabricated. The writings of the most celebrated of the Fathers were not more respected than the acts of Councils. "Nowhere have there been more barefaced falsifications and lies than in this domain," wrote the aged canon Döllinger in holy wrath. Let us restrain our indignation. These pious falsifiers unquestionably acted in all good conscience. Respect for truth is a modern virtue, the child of historic criticism. Violence, subterfuge and falsehood have always had their part in the founding and triumph of dynasties. Why should we not find them in that of the papacy?

In another respect the papacy is no exception to the general rule of human authorities. All enduring dynasties have their weak kings and infamous princes. The history of the French monarchy brings the witness of the last of the Merovingians and the Valois. The papacy has had its reasons for shame as for glory, its unworthy members and its great men. The great pontificate of Gregory VII was preceded by a period of more than a century, branded with the name of the Pornocracy, during which courtesans disposed of the tiara, and a child of twelve, eaten up with vices, occupied the seat of Gregory I and Louis the Great. After Benedict IX and John XV Hildebrand fortunately arose, just as Henry IV, Richelieu, and Louis XIV followed Charles IX and Henry III; were it otherwise no institution would be enduring.

The papacy triumphed over its humiliation and trials, because its roots were sunk deep in the religious faith of the peoples, and after every crisis it drew fresh vigour therefrom. In those times, when the feudal system was founding a new governing principle upon the triumph of

[1] Appendix LXIII.

brute force, the Church alone represented intellectual and moral power, the principle of justice and charity. The prevailing ascetic and sacerdotal conception of Christianity inspired a general sense of a radical opposition between the natural life and the supernatural life, the flesh and the soul, the clergy and the people, the convent and the world, the Church and the State. The dogma of the natural corruption of the human race made the divine help of the priest everywhere necessary. In this antagonism of a lost world and a redeeming Church, the Church naturally assumed and claimed a mission to guide and govern. God had put into her hands the guardianship of the peoples, and as the Roman pontiff was the vicar of Jesus Christ, the princes of the earth, equally with the people, owed her the submission due to Divinity.

It was not in vain that at this time an ascetic, not to say a monk, was raised up to be the reformer of the clergy and the restorer of the theocracy. The dream of Hildebrand was a mystic dream. In the religious life he had learned the strange new secret, born of Christianity, of how to conquer the world by renunciation, to gain wealth by the vow of poverty, and to secure absolute power by the profession of extreme humility.[1] But there was this fatal contradiction: when the monastic life by its virtues had succeeded in dominating the age, the latter on its part entered the monastery with its wealth and corrupted it. It is the vicious circle in which every theocracy is lost. The method might be the best if worked out by angels; in human hands it became the worst.[2]

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the dream of Gregory seemed about to be fulfilled. In Innocent III the papacy dominated Europe, it disposed of the crowns of kings and the consciences of peoples. This triumph was of short duration; with the next century everything was transformed. Scholasticism completed its glorious evolution and fell in ruins under the criticism of nominalism. The national

[1] Appendix LXIV.

[2] See the bitter criticisms, the grieved complaints, the impious satires of the Middle Ages, provoked by the clerical life, and calling for a reform in the Church from its head to its members.

sentiment awoke, the moral and ecclesiastical horizon broadened, the world entered upon new paths. Boniface III put forward the same pretensions as his predecessors, but he was powerless to maintain them. He died from the humiliation of Anagni. From this moment we rapidly descend the farther slope of the mountain. The theocracy has been. Four great crises mark this decline, each ending in a new defeat of papal pretensions. The first is the struggle of Boniface VIII against Philip the Fair with the States-General of France at his back. It ended in the emancipation of the royal power and the humiliation of the papacy, rent with intestine dissensions and captive at Avignon. Two centuries later it was the Reformation, which, invoked for three centuries by the most notable voices in the Church, at last broke forth in tempest at the voice of Luther, proclaimed the autonomy of the Christian conscience, and detached half Europe from the Church. Still later, the French Revolution swept away the divine right of the Middle Ages in the name of modern law and the sovereignty of the people, and completed the threefold secularisation of political power, of civil life, and of human thought.

Finally, in our own day, it is the foundation of the new kingdom of Italy, crowned by the entrance of the Italians into Rome in 1870 and the retreat of the Pope into the Vatican. The States of the Church, created by politics, are swept away by politics after a thousand years. Memorable date in history, striking demonstration made by the very force of things, that nothing here is immutable, that is to say, immortal!

In these crises the papacy assuredly did not die, but it was transformed. Having ceased to be a power in the political order, it became a dogma in the religious order. It remains to consider it under this last aspect.

V

The Infallible Pope

It will be interesting to seek the precise moment when the personal infallibility of the Roman bishop made its first appearance in history.

We are at once led to the initial reflection that at the present time the infallibility of the Pope makes his authority: formerly it was his authority that made his infallibility. It is with the dogma of infallibility as with the theory of the divine right of kings. Divine right never founded a kingdom nor established any dynasty, but the kingdom once founded and the dynasty established, divine right appeared to consecrate and protect both.

The degree of infallibility accorded to the Pope has always been proportioned to the measure of authority which he had acquired and exercised. When his authority became absolute, his infallibility became entire. He who could arrogate to himself the sovereign right to command the conscience could not be conceived of as erring. This is why the idea of infallibility dates from the Middle Ages and the theocratic pontificate of Gregory VII. Thomas Aquinas is the first among the Doctors who brought it forward as an article of Catholic theology.

It is easy to explain its genesis. Since the third century, by virtue of the saying of Christ that his Church shall never fail, it has been a dogma of the Catholic faith that the truth always and of necessity resides in the authentic tradition of the Church and the legitimate succession of the bishops. By them the apostolic teachings were transmitted, continued, guaranteed, and always exempt from error. Now in the West Rome alone could boast of having an episcopal see of apostolic origin. It was universally lauded as the faithful guardian of the sacred deposit of tradition. It became an axiom that to be orthodox one must be in accord with Rome. From this point the movement is evident. Infallibility, which had been the attribute of the one universal Church,

became with the lapse of time concentrated in the Church of Rome, and thence passed finally to its bishop. When the Pope was held as the head and mouthpiece of the Church, how could infallibility be expressed by any other head or any other lips? Must not he who, in his own person, sums up the entire Church, possess all its attributes and exercise all authority in its name?

This perfectly logical system was the work of centuries. The ancient order did not foresee it, the Scriptures show no trace of it. The early bishops of Rome have no suspicion of it.[1] Originally, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, and Corinth vaunted themselves as apostolic sees. These churches found in their several traditions the same doctrinal guaranty which Rome found in its own. Therefore they were always persistent in maintaining their independence. Their bishops always claimed to be peers of their colleagues of Rome, praising them warmly or blaming them with the greatest freedom, according as they seemed worthy of praise or blame. Paul vigorously reprimands Peter at Antioch. Ignatius commands the fidelity of the Romans; Anicetus earns the gratitude of the churches for his position with regard to Polycarp. On the other hand, Victor, by his insolence, brings upon himself the censure of Irenæus and the protests of all the Eastern bishops. St. Hippolytus exposes and stigmatises the intrigues of Calixtus. Tertullian rallies him upon the ambitious and pagan titles with which he adorns himself. When Stephen of Rome excommunicated Cyprian, Firmilian, the other bishops, and the synods of Carthage make reply that Stephen has simply excommunicated himself. These are not isolated facts; they form the tissue of the inner life of the Church during long centuries. In fact, the one thing which is absolutely lacking is the idea of the personal infallibility of any bishop soever.

If this belief had then existed, the history of the Church during the first thousand years of its existence would have been entirely different. Starting from the hypothesis of a Pope with the sovereign and universal authority of a Pius IX or a Leo XIII officiating at Rome from the

[1] Appendix LXV.

beginning, the entire early ages become absolutely unintelligible. The groping attempts of second-century Catholicity to constitute itself an organised Church, the general attitude of the bishops, the episcopal system of Cyprian, the interminable dogmatic controversies, the convocation and the conduct of councils, the rivalries of the great metropolises of Christianity, the late birth of Roman legends, and finally, the schism which definitively separated the orthodox and Catholic East from the Western Church, when at last the papacy had been constituted, are alike inexplicable. No; the sovereign power of the bishops of Rome was not constituted from the beginning; it was slowly formed and developed by the most laborious of evolutions.

By his genius and the favour of circumstances, Leo I won the victory for Catholic orthodoxy in the East and at the Council of Chalcedony, and in the contest between the Monophysites and the Nestorians he appeared like a second Athanasius; but more than one of those who preceded and followed him in the Roman See gravely compromised its authority and were stamped with solemn disapproval. St. Hippolytus formally accused Calixtus of heresy, and no apology could wash him from that stain;[1] Liberius (352-366) twice signed a semi-Arian confession and abandoned the cause of Athanasius[2] that he might return from exile and rescue his seat from his rival, Felix; Vigilius (537-555) stands convicted of using dogmatic duplicity to gain the episcopal throne as well as of inconstancy and infidelity.[3] Finally, the most celebrated of all on the list of heretical bishops or popes, Honorius I (625-638), was anathematised by the Ecumenical Councils and afterward by his successors in the papacy, who each by turn, on entering upon office, pronounced him accursed.[4]

To tell the truth, such sentences surprised no one at that time because no one had yet any idea of the personal infallibility of the Bishop of Rome. It began to germinate with the entirely unforeseen extension of

[1] "Philosophoumena," ix. 11.
[2] Appendix LXVI.
[3] Appendix LXVII.
[4] Appendix LXVIII.

the papal power, especially after the appearance of the "False Decretals."[1] In the tenth century the Popes were despised, but not the papacy. With Gregory VII the Pope became the vicar of God, and the bishops merely the vicars of the Pope.[2] The latter held in custody all the legislative power of the Church to such a point that the Councils had merely advisory power. Even more: the Pope is the master of the religious law which he promulgates; it binds others, but it never binds him.[3] Gregory claimed entire and perfect holiness as well as infallibility as the head of the Church, if not in his own person, as Bishop of Rome; and he was right when we consider that sin never fails to obscure the moral sense.[4] But this claim never prevailed. It was too strongly contradicted by the lives of certain Popes. The very idea of infallibility was still so foreign to the Church in general that in his controversies with Boniface VIII Philip the Fair was not afraid to summon the Pope before a Council General to be judged and condemned as demoniac and heretic, because of his errors, his vices, and his senseless pretensions, which were visibly inspired by the devil. None the less was the thesis of papal infallibility put forward, with the arguments by which it finally prevailed, in the bull of this pontiff, *Unam Sanctam*, which has become the charter of the power of the Roman Curia.[5] Thomas Aquinas, deceived by false Greek documents which had lately been added to the earlier ones, lent his great authority to the support of this doctrine, as has already been said.[6]

It would seem as if the doctrine must have succumbed before the long scandal exhibited by the papacy during the period called the Captivity of Babylon, when two or even three Popes were claimants of the tiara, and no one could tell which was the true successor of Peter. Extraordinary things were done at the Council of Constance. Two Popes were

[1] Appendix LXIX. [2] Appendix LXX. [3] Appendix LXXI.

[4] Gregory "Dictat." 23. "*Quod romanus Pontifex si canonice fuerit ordinatus meritis B. Petri efficitur sanctus.*" Logic will have it so, but history!

[5] Appendix LXXII. [6] Appendix LXXIII.

cited to appear, were judged and deposed: a third was elected. Never was situation more curious than the attitude of the Roman Curia before this council. Was it or was it not an ecumenical council acting with authority? To recognise it as such is to recognise the council as superior to the papacy, as to all other dignitaries of the Church. To deny it is to invalidate the election of Pope Martin V, and by that act to create a vacancy in the apostolic chair; it is to raise a doubt as to the legitimacy of the cardinals created by this Pope, and in consequence, of all the Popes elected since that time. The conception of a religious authority, regularly transmissible like an extrinsic right, is a fine thing. But history makes strange breaches in it which not all the subsequent canonists can avail to repair.

The fifteenth-century councils having shown themselves as impotent to reform the Church as to save it from anarchy, a reaction in favour of the papacy set in. In the general disorder a fixed point, a centre of authority, was essential. It was easy for the Roman canonists to persuade political authorities that this point of resistance could be nowhere else but in Rome. Heads of States lightly sacrificed the franchises of national churches.[1] The papacy knitted together the broken threads of its tradition and resumed all the pretensions of the great Popes of the Middle Ages.[2]

Thenceforth the Popes, without explicitly claiming infallibility, adopted the policy of acting in all things as if it was theirs, letting no expression of a contrary opinion pass without disapproval. They could not prevent the Council of Trent, but they so arranged things that their authority should be neither checked nor restricted. The Council let pass without protest the bull by which Pius IV arrogated to himself the right to apply its decisions. The Popes summoned to the Court of Rome all important discussions and ecclesiastical causes. Thus they accustomed people and kings to see in them the final tribunal from which there was

[1] Francis I in 1517 yielded to the Pope the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VII.
[2] Bulls of Pius II, "Execrabilis" (1459), and Leo X, "Pastor Æternus" (1516).

no appeal, the judge of all controversy, the supreme oracle of the truth.

The last opposition in the Church was that offered by Gallicanism, which came to the front in 1682 in four declarations of the clergy of France, inspired by Bossuet and supported by Louis XIV. The papacy made haste to pass censure upon them, and its diplomacy, making the most of the weakness and hesitancy of an aged and timorous king, found it easy to reduce them to the category of Platonic aspirations and dead letters. In the far-famed Company of Jesus Rome had gained an incomparable army, which from the sixteenth century made the cause of authority its own. The final triumph of infallibility is the real triumph of Jesuitism in the Church.

It has sometimes, but mistakenly, been said that the true head of the Church was the general of the Jesuits. The correct statement is that since the proclamation of the new dogma the entire hierarchy has become a Company of Jesus, of which the Pope is general.

Everything indeed for two hundred years past has contributed to the last triumph of the papacy; as much the oppositions of its adversaries as the zeal and cleverness of its partisans; the French Revolution, uprooting the clergy of France from their native soil; Napoleon by his concordat giving over the parish priests to episcopal absolutism, and putting the bishops into the hands of the Pope.[1] Even the liberal Catholics, strangely blind, taking sides with the papacy against Gallican liberties and the civil power, laboured no less efficaciously for the triumph of the Vatican dogma than the writers of the pure theocratic school, from Joseph de Maistre to Louis Veuillot.

By 1850 the issue of the struggle was no longer doubtful. To put his power to a sort of test, Pius IX, having consulted the bishops by personal letters, decreed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary upon his own authority.[2] The indifference with which the

[1] Taine, "Les origines de la France contemporaine," V.

[2] A. Réville, "Encycl. des sc. relig., art., "Conception Immaculée"; E. Chastet, "Hist. du Christ." V., p. 171.

Church accepted this *coup d'état* was a sign of the times. A Council General might be convoked, but it would find nothing to do but to abdicate in favour of the Pope, and confirm in law that which existed in fact. The resistance of the minority was as brilliant as it was vain. The end toward which the papal power had long and perseveringly laboured could not but come to pass.[1]

That the papacy should thus reach a sort of apotheosis is marvellous but not miraculous. Every stage in it from the beginning is logical, and linked together as in the history of great empires. The same tendency which forced the bishop up from the ranks of the presbyters of the apostolic age brought the papacy forth from the episcopate. Dominated by the political necessity of manifesting its unity in a visible organ, ready to sacrifice everything for this pagan idol, the Church naturally came to substitute a concrete person for the abstract unity of the bishops and to change its former aristocratic and parliamentary rule into an absolute monarchy. Thus the republic of patrician Rome became the empire of the Cæsars. All the powers and privileges of the Church were concentrated in one single head. He who had been merely the servitor was now the master. Theocracy, driven from the civil order, was realised in the religious order. As the fountain of dogma and priesthood, of sacramental grace and canonical law, the Pope now verily appears to docile consciences as the representative of God on earth.

But, oh, irony of human things! The end of it all is that this quasi-divine power, in exalting itself, has destroyed its sure foundation, and henceforth rests only upon itself, that is to say, upon its own affirmation, with no possible justification either in history or in reason. As Canon Döllinger said: "It is all very simple. The Catholic believer will say, 'I believe in the infallible Pope because the Pope has said that he is infallible.'" In fact, that is the whole story. The papacy created itself, and then kept itself alive by devouring all the rest—authority of bishops, authority of councils, authority of tradition, authority of the Church. The papacy has shattered all, annulled them all. Its power is henceforth

[1] Appendix LXIV.

simply a power of fact, exposed, like every other fact, to the hazards of history. History brought it into being, history explains it, history will do away with it.

In fact, it needs nothing else than history to cause that which the dying Montalembert called " the Vatican idol " to totter upon its pedestal of clay. But these inescapable revelations are of further portent. They bring out two facts into a startling light. First, the personal infallibility of the Pope is a religious fiction, invented for the maintenance of an outworn political system. Second, the Ecumenical Council, by giving its sanction to this fiction as divine, demonstrates by this very fact that the infallibility of councils is as fictitious as that of Popes. In truth, if the Pope is not infallible, no more is the council which declares him so. But what, in its turn, becomes of the infallibility of the Church, with no organ for its expression? Thus the system of Catholic authority breaks down in the middle, succumbing under the weight of the consequences of its first principle.

The apologists, therefore, are working at cross-purposes. The more they succeed (no difficult matter) in showing that the dogma of infallibility is the logical conclusion of the premisses of Catholicism, the more they constrain independent minds to go back and revise the premisses.

VI

The Future of the Papacy

The papacy will doubtless last a good while longer. We are not concerned to calculate how long. Our work is that of the historian, not of the prophet. We would simply try to determine the new conditions of existence to which she must henceforth accommodate herself.

Those who observe the course of human events, being accustomed to trace the succession of all living organisms in nature, and in history that of empires, institutions, and all forms of society, find that a pretty poor argument which consists in saying, " The papacy has lasted fifteen cen-

turies, therefore it is eternal." It is almost as if we should say of a robust old man, "He has lived for eighty years, therefore he will live forever." What are fifteen centuries in the infinite series of ages? Time carries away or modifies everything to which it gives birth, and the papacy will be no exception. A thousand historical causes in the religious, social, and philanthropic order gradually brought about its triumph; causes of the same nature are everywhere at work, if not to destroy, at least to transform it. It was one thing in ancient days, another in the Middle Ages, another in modern times; it will be another in the future. Its destiny depends upon its gift of self-adaptation to the necessities of modern times. It will live so long as it retains this gift; when it is exhausted that will happen which happens to every institution: it will have lived.

In the later centuries of its history we note a curious rhythm of contradictory effects, a sort of inevitable law by which every victory, every access of power achieved in the Church by the papacy, corresponds to a defeat, a diminution of influence in the State, in the order of thought, and of the secular life. The same year which saw the dogmatic apotheosis of the Pope in Rome, saw also the disappearance of the last vestiges of his temporal sovereignty. A pendulum movement at once exalts the Pontiff and annuls the Prince.

The double phenomenon is produced by one and the same cause. The theocratic principle, the principle of supernatural authority, which made it all-powerful in the religious order, at the same time revealed it as a perpetual menace to the independence of civil powers and the liberty of nations. The schismatic peoples, whose moral and religious life is independent, have felt no need of any intimate and official relations with Rome. Those which have remained Catholic are always in conflict with her, consuming their strength in controversies as interminable as sterile.

By the Syllabus of 1864, the papacy declared war upon freedom of thought and modern civilisation. Here stand face to face two tendencies, two irreconcilable principles. The principle of modern culture

is the autonomy of the reason and the conscience, and consequently of peoples and their governments, as well as of philosophy, art, and science. This principle asserts itself in the progressive secularisation of institutions and laws, by the enfranchisement of the human mind from priestly and so-called supernatural tutelage. We have eliminated the supernatural from science and philosophy; little by little we shall eliminate it from politics and social life. But what is modern papacy speaking and commanding in the name of God himself, if not the supernatural operating before our eyes on a single point upon this planet, while all around it goes on the free and irresistible expansion of all human aspirations and potentialities?

But, it may be asked, may not this variance, or if you please, this antagonism cease? Is a reconciliation impossible?

At this point a school presents itself, as lavish as it is apt in fallacy, which says that we must distinguish between the principle of modern civilisation and its errors or evil fruits. The Church does not condemn the first, but only the others. After all, civilisation is of Christian origin; it is Christian by its aspirations, its respect for law, its desire for equality, its longing for fraternal solidarity. Why should this hostility last forever? Naturally the Church does not accept liberty of conscience, the equality of all citizens and all opinions before the law, as religious dogmas, but she adopts them as principles of civil and natural order. She herself demands only the common right and seeks to conquer only by persuasion. It is optional to accept the truth which she teaches; all she asks is liberty to preach it.

Would to Heaven that this school were right! But let us trace the consequences of this theory and method of freedom. Henceforth the Catholic Church lays aside its age-long claim to dominate the civil power and dictate its laws. Like every other religious or philosophical society she places herself in the field of the common right of free discussion and competition. She will content herself with being the most ancient as well as the most considerable of the Churches; she will suffer without a mur-

mur the existence of dissident churches at her side. She will gain them to herself only by the force of being right. But what does all this signify if not that she consents to make reason and the conscience sovereign judges of religious opinion, and by that act yields the exterior principle of supernatural authority and legitimacy? What does it signify, indeed, if not an admission that the dogma of Rome is nothing more than one of many different opinions, equally subject to the tests of criticism; in short, that she is nothing other than one more sect, or if that word offends, one of a thousand forms of historic Christianity, between which we are free to choose?

The papacy is far indeed from views such as these. For her to accept them would be to abdicate. Instinct alone must warn her that the tendency of all liberal Catholicism at bottom implies the negation of the principle upon which the entire Papal system rests. For this reason she permits not one of these liberal conceits to pass without excessive censure. From the tentative of Lamennais to the Americanism of Father Hecker, the experiment has had but one solution. Popes may change, but the attitude of the papacy remains the same. To be surprised at this is to show ignorance of the conditions. The theocratic idea is the very essence of the papacy.

The great strength of this system of government lies in this: that men confuse with it the Church itself, and identify the Church with religion. How many intelligent minds still imagine that the downfall of the papal system would carry with it that of the Christian Church and even of all religion! It is true that partisans of the theocracy do all in their power to create and perpetuate this illusion. But they are doing precisely what the advocates of royalty did when, identifying France with monarchy by divine right, they maintained that the overthrow of the latter would be the destruction of the former. The throne of Louis XIV has been destroyed, but with liberty France has entered upon a new course. So it would be with religion, if the theocratic form which is still dominant in Catholic nations were abolished. Is religion indeed any

less intense and efficient among these peoples which no longer receive their rule of faith and morals from Rome?

But, it is urged, does not Catholicism make conquests and conversions? May it not extend itself indefinitely by its missions among Protestant peoples, schismatic Orientals, and races still pagan? Why should not the papacy even yet restore the moral and religious unity of the world? To discuss partial successes and far-distant hopes serves no real end. The conquests of Catholicism, were they as real as they are illusory, would no more prove her supernatural claims to be true than those of Islamism in Africa, for example, would demonstrate the truth of Mohammed's revelations. The apparent successes of any religious form simply bring to light a certain momentary correspondence between the form and the moral and political condition of the social environment in which it has gained a place. To the intelligent mind there is no common measure between the truth of a thesis and the welcome which it may at any time receive. The truth of the religious question is not a question of majorities. It did not need that the words of Jesus in Galilee should be received with acclamation by the entire nation before distressed and burdened consciences could receive them as divine truth. The dream of universal dominion cherished by certain conquerors was far less chimerical than that indulged in by the Popes of effecting a unity of minds under an absolute theocratic monarchy. Minds are less easily bent than bodies. If, by impossibility, all the peoples of the earth should one day enter the pale of the Roman Church, without question they would bring with them their characters, their temperaments, their tendencies; and the new empire would no sooner be formed than its inevitable dismemberment would at once begin.

To return to the actual present. The papacy maintains its claims, but it cannot change the conditions of life which this reality imposes upon it.

Having become a dogma, the papacy has ceased to be any other than a metaphysical power. No doubt it is still surrounded with a halo of

distinction, and its spiritual action weighs heavily in those councils where the policies of all governments are decided. But the very character of the diplomacy to which the Holy See must resort in order to exercise it proves with evidence how greatly the times have changed since Gregory VII and Innocent III.

Compare the conduct of these great Popes and the relations of Leo XIII with the German Emperor, who stands in the place of the unhappy Henry IV, or with Queen Victoria, who occupied the throne of John Lackland. The weapon of excommunication, once all-powerful, is now shattered. The Roman thunderbolt is silenced, and will never again call any sovereign to Canossa.

The problem of the papacy becomes every day more restricted. The Pope remains in Rome, and such is his position that he is no longer king, and he cannot be subject. The condition strikingly illustrates the nature of his authority everywhere. In every modern nation the Roman Catholic Church is confronted with civil and political laws which she can neither attack nor sincerely accept. She is inexorably set between adhesion and abdication. Unable to bring herself to accept either alternative, she resigns herself to the situation under protest.

The same distress is hers in the domain of thought. The theology of authority must either forbid philosophical discussion or accept it. In the first case it is self-excluded from the arena in which at the present day all living opinions freely struggle and make their way, and in that case it wins from modern science only a disdainful neglect. In the second case it is bound to own the universal jurisdiction of the reason, and thenceforth its dogma, stripped of all exterior and supernatural authority, is merely one solution among many others, of the problems now occupying natural science, the history of religions, and philosophy in general.

Now, if the Catholic dogma is ever put into the crucible of scientific discussion, it will not come out just as it went in. That will happen to it which has happened to all systems, even the noblest and best. It will come out transformed. This is to say, that it will descend, that it

has already descended, from the region of the absolute and the supernatural to the uncertain course of human ideas and things. Its substance may survive, its form will necessarily be renewed.

Such is the power of things; such is the law of history. In vain does the papacy stiffen itself against the current; it is the product of historic evolution, and in its turn must yield to it. In vain does it appeal to supernatural rights and promises of eternity. Criticism applies itself to the texts which it invokes, and discovers their futility or their apocryphal character. As the succession and continuation of the empire of the Cæsars, it has no surer warrant than had that empire itself against final decomposition. Not less did the Romans of the Augustan age doubt the eternity of their domination of the world. They foresaw neither the partition of their empire nor the formation of rival nations in the East, giving opportunity for the invasion of the barbarians, nor did they dream of the new forces, like Islam, which Asia was already brooding in her mysterious womb. In their world-conquering pride they applied to themselves the oracles of Jupiter, which obliging mythology, reflecting their political ambition, had accumulated around the cradle of their race.

His ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono;
Imperium sine fine dedi. . .

Is it possible for a critical mind to lend greater faith to the more recent mythology with which the papacy has veiled its origin? Have its institution by Christ and the chain of apostolical succession more reality than the genealogy by which the blood of Æneas was traced in the family of the Cæsars? Such poetic garlands hung on the front of the engine which moves the train adorn it to the eyes and imagination, but they do not make the steam which from within sets it in motion, nor are they supposed to do so. A few more revolutions of the wheels toward the unknown future, and the face of the world will be renewed. The Catholic form of the Church had its history, its greatness, its efficacy, in the past. Other forms are being secretly prepared which will unfold in

their turn, to respond to new needs and render to future ages services no less necessary.

There are two factors in Roman Catholicism: a profound and noble religion, a vital sap of Christian life, a fountain of mystic uplift and heroic devotion never to be forgotten by those souls which have been renewed and invigorated by it. By this piety they were born anew into the higher ideal life of duty and love. But there is also an absolute government, a hierarchy which oppresses the conscience, which is the enemy of all free and spontaneous inspiration, fettering the thought in outworn dogmas and the moral life in puerile exercises of devotion. It is a mistake to believe that the vigour of the first of these elements depends upon the stability of the second. That is a delusion. Let one analyse his own feelings and consult history, and he will see that faith came before orthodoxy and piety before the priesthood; that the hierarchy depends upon religion, and not religion upon the hierarchy.

The modern world can neither endure the one nor do without the other. In vain are the two presented to it as an indivisible whole, which must be taken or left in entirety. Time is the great critic; it decomposes the firmest rocks; it transforms the most unyielding institutions. It will find a way to dissolve the Catholic amalgam and set free all that is vital, while casting away all that is only a survival of the past.

Likewise, in the Catholic dogma of authority, it is proper to distinguish between the principle of natural and legitimate authority spontaneously created in every society, religious or other, which is enduring and has a mission to accomplish, and the dogmatic theory by which, under pretext of strengthening it, authority is *supernaturalised* and made absolute. Beginning as less than an infant, an embryo, every man comes in contact with and should bless the society which nurtured, educated, and brought him to manhood. Who would wish to deny that in the beginning of the Middle Ages the Catholic Church was a strong and admirable schoolmistress, that her action was potent, her authority uncontested, so long as her mission was not accomplished? But let none forget that even

in education it is the truth which makes authority, not the contrary. The teacher does not create the truth; he should lead to it. His instruction must make itself understood and accepted by the reason and the conscience which early awakes in the soul of the child. If it is convicted of falsehood, it loses all authority in the eyes of the most docile pupil. Which is to say that there is in man a sense which perceives the truth, and a norm by which to recognise and test it. In moral things the man breaks away from the tutelage of authority and rises to the autonomy of his own conscience. This is why all authorities are relative, and must be modified with time if they are to be maintained.

The Roman Catholic Church has not thus understood it. She has thought to save her authority by investing it with the supernatural; she has killed it. A supernatural authority in the exterior order necessarily becomes first a political authority, and afterward an oppressive authority. It tends to subordinate truth to itself, instead of devoting itself to truth. It is no longer the servant of the truth; it wills to be its mistress, and even believes itself to have created the truth. It demands submission before having convinced its pupil. Its word alone is truth, not because it is evident, but because it is its own. The same supernatural element stiffens the system of authority, exaggerates it, and forbids its reformation. How could it be infallible if it could ever need reformation? Unable to follow the development of the mind, it is fatally in opposition to it. The forms of authority which are suited to humanity in its infancy and minority are exasperating to an adult and enlightened humanity. Thus revolt becomes inevitable. A conflict breaks out between the conscience and tradition, and its sole possible issue, in the religious order, is Protestantism.

BOOK II

THE PROTESTANT DOGMA OF AUTHORITY

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THE PROTESTANT DOGMA OF AUTHORITY

CHAPTER ONE

PRIMITIVE PROTESTANTISM

I

The Reformation and Humanism

NOTHING is more frivolous or less historical than to consider the Reformation of the sixteenth century as an accident caused by monkish quarrels or the political rivalries of princes. It can be understood only on two conditions: first, that of penetrating to its intimate relations with the general evolution of mind at that epoch, an evolution which made possible this attempt at reformation; and second, that of grasping the religious principle, at once old and new, which made it an irresistible force.

Why did that Reformation of the Church, which had been so often attempted in vain by many pious souls and heroic workers in the Middle Ages finally succeed in at least half of Europe with Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin? It is to be explained only by the general complicity which their enterprise met in the new spiritual and moral tendencies of the time, and the mighty response which their protest everywhere awakened in the most enlightened and religious souls. Why does the little seed, dropped by the sower in the beginning of winter, after slumbering beneath the snow-covered and frost-hardened earth, suddenly awake and press upward, a vigorous plant, when the air becomes more clement? The season has changed, the sun is a few degrees higher above the horizon, and the face of the earth is made new.

Thus the seasons of history succeed one another by the continued

evolution of minds. But never was the change more evident than on the eve of the Reformation, in that age justly named the Renascence. In those days the larks were everywhere singing to the sky and hailing the rising sun. Everywhere activity reigned, ardent, free, joyful, like that which on spring mornings awakes in the hives of bees and the homes of men. "O new age!" cries Ulrich von Hütten, "study is flourishing, minds are awaking, it is a joy to live!"

Yet we should not look upon the Middle Ages as a period of darkness and death. As its name well indicates, it was a period of transition between the old time and the new. Nothing was more necessary nor more fruitful for the souls of the western nations than this long, severe discipline. By it their energy of thought and will was tempered. It is said that the races who inhabit the fortunate isles, in climes that have no winter, lack also vigour of character.

Since the awakening that marked the Carolingian epoch, activity of mind and the love of study had been interruptedly growing and extending. Scholasticism, though by itself sterile, like all philosophy and science based on authority, had none the less equipped the human reason for a more fruitful labour. With the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it began to turn from abstractions, empty of reality, to observe the phenomena of nature. The notion of the universe was enlarging. The discovery of America had stirred imagination and thought to new activity. Inventions of every kind, like that of printing, radically changed the general conditions of existence, and inspired in the human mind the idea of endless progress. Finally, the study of the literature of former times, revived after the fall of Constantinople by the diffusion of ancient manuscripts and of Greek teachers through the western world, gave the finishing touch to the growing distaste for the old formalism, and ravished men's minds with a new ideal of learning, a new sense of beauty. If it is true that all the functions of the soul are fundamentally one, and that the religion of a people, at least in its forms, must always depend upon the degree of their general culture, how should a Church which so

visibly wore the rust of the Middle Ages escape this movement of universal transformation?

Here, however, we must beware of misapprehension, nor must we confound the favourable conditions which made a religious reformation possible with the cause, or the force, which brought it about. The cause was not in humanism. Humanism was a matter of æsthetic taste and high intellectual curiosity, but it had neither religious or moral quality, nor Christian character, nor had it any desire to carry on a popular apostolate of reformation. Enthusiasm for classic antiquity lay at a lower level than the gospel, and led directly to the paganism of Rome and Athens.

Humanism was the foe of scholasticism, whose vain formalism and absurd pretensions it unmercifully satirised; but in its moral apathy and its conceit of aristocratic and Epicurean learning it could accommodate itself far more easily to sacerdotal tyranny, content with external respect, than to the storms and dangers of a revolution. If we would know how little it possessed of the reforming spirit we must study it in Italy, where, from the middle of the fifteenth century, Popes and cardinals had been the most zealous patrons of art and ancient letters, unscrupulously associating the largest freedom of morals and the most easy-going unbelief with the most jealous concern for their own authority and the most rigorous support of the old ecclesiastical system. Leo X was Pope of the Christian Church very much as Augustus had been Supreme Pontiff of the old Roman religion. Superstition suited the people, and elegant incredulity the intellectual class. Such a social separation, with the hypocrisy which follows in its train, was the necessary result of humanism.

Not from without, nor by the action of a foreign and heterogeneous impulse, could the reformation of the Church be effected. It must spring from the bosom of the Church itself. Religion can indeed be reformed neither by artificial grafting nor by the theoretical processes of rational criticism. When it cannot draw new forms from its own fundamental

principle it is a proof that the root is withered, and the tree has nothing to do but die. It was not thus with the Christianity of the Middle Ages.

We must distinguish between Christianity and the Church. There is certainly room for surprise that the state of corruption into which the latter had fallen had not resulted in so enervating the entire Christian life as to leave it impotent. But the truth is, that while the disorders, vices, and superstitions of the Church had extinguished the religious sentiment in some, it had contrariwise exalted and strengthened it in others. The moral worthlessness of a great proportion of the clergy, the vanity of ritual forms, the religious mercantilism, alike failing to minister to the religious need, made it only the more profoundly and vividly felt. True and sincere piety, forced to abandon the exterior institution and official representatives of religion, of necessity learned to distinguish the inward from the outward, the essential from the accessory, the soul from the body of religion. It fell back upon itself, recovered its grasp of the inward virtue of its ideal principle, and gained a clearer consciousness of its transcendent spirituality, its independence of traditional forms, outward institutions, and human mediations between God and the conscience. Thus all through the Middle Ages a curious phenomenon was taking place which we cannot too carefully study; as the Church morally declined, papacy, priests, and monks more openly scandalising the people by their morals, their politics, and their frankly pagan life, in the same degree the Christian spirit grew inwardly stronger, mystic piety unfolded in the shade to such a degree that perhaps never did either appear to be richer in vital sap, more spiritually free and detached from the official organism, than in the period which preceded the Reformation.

The contrast, growing daily more flagrant, must of necessity at last become active opposition. The disquietude of Christendom grew greater day by day. Religious need, unsatisfied in the traditional order, cried out for a new order of things. The plaint of pious souls became universal. From all sides arose a demand for the reformation of the Church.

in head and members, and when all hopes proved vain, when Popes, councils, clergy, princes, showed themselves incapable of keeping their promises and even hostile to the universal desire, a revolution was inevitable.

Inflammable matter was everywhere, scattered or concentrated, in the convents, the country parishes, the universities, in the closets of the learned, the courts of kings, the castles of the nobles, the corporations of burghers and of artisans. It needed only that a few strong individualities, concentrating in themselves the spirit and needs of the time, should arise and lift up their voices, and instantly, from north to south, a thousand incendiary centres would burst into flame, and the long suppressed fire would overrun every province and enwrap all society in its blaze. There is no other way to explain the sudden and prodigious influence of Luther in Germany, of Zwingli in Switzerland, of Farel and Calvin in the lands of the French tongue. By the response which their voices awakened we may judge of the impatience with which they had been awaited.

The success of the Reformation is explained by the intimate harmony between the general tendency of the time and the strong religious individualities who then came to the front. Without the almost universal co-operation of the people the sixteenth-century Reformation would have been as impotent as those which preceded it; but without their individual religious inspiration, their strength of soul, their genius for apostleship, the general tendency of the time would have remained sterile.

It is a law of the moral and religious life that no progress, no renewal, can take place except by means of great individualities in whom the new ideal is incarnated and made visible. Prophets and apostles are necessary to God in his work. To raise them up at the propitious hour is his secret. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth." Luther belongs to the family of religious initiators, of men greatly inspired. He has the inspiration and eloquence of the prophets of Israel. The work which the prophets accomplished in developing a moral religion and universal

monotheism from the monolatry of the ancient Hebrews entered upon a new stage when Luther and his fellow-reformers caused the religion of the Spirit and of liberty to burst into bloom from the stock of Catholic legalism and formality.

We might carry the parallel farther, but we have said enough to enable the reader to perceive the distance that separates the humanist from the reformer—Erasmus from Luther. The criticism of Erasmus is penetrating; his scorn of abuses, disorders, ignorance, cuts deep, but from the religious point of view his entire action is sterile, because it is purely negative, and the humanist always ends by resigning himself and accommodating himself to that which he can indeed ridicule, but which he neither knows how to destroy or to modify. The reformer, on the contrary, uproots and replants; he ploughs and sows; words of life fall from his lips; a creative breath not his own breathes from his breast, makes souls to live, and brings into being a new world. "Erasmus," said Luther, "did that to which he was called: he introduced the ancient languages, he awakened a distaste for unwholesome studies. But once again, with Moses, the leader dies in the plains of Moab. His merit was assuredly great; he pointed out and arraigned evil; but to make manifest the good and lead his people into the promised land, this was beyond his power." [1]

II

Originality of the Reformation Principle

It is no question of theory which underlies the Reformation, but a moral and thoroughly practical question; the ardent desire for inward righteousness and peace with God. We know the moral agonies of Luther in the monastery at Erfurt; he asked for only one thing; pardon of sin and peace of conscience.

The question was resolved for him, as for Saul of Tarsus, by the

[1] "Letter of Luther to Œcolampadius," 1523.

pure and simple gospel, by the promise of a free pardon given by Christ to repentance and faith; that is, to the confidence of the child in the Heavenly Father's love. On this side, the principle of the Reformation is by no means original or new. It is the primitive creating principle of Christianity itself.

How, then, did this principle become a new and even a revolutionary principle?

In Catholicism it had been singularly allied with surviving elements both of antique paganism and of Judaism. Yet more, it had identified itself with the very body of the Church in which it had first been realised.

This identification of the idea and the external fact is the essential characteristic of Catholicism. Thus the ideal principle of the religion of the Spirit was enchained and imprisoned in the forms, the rites, the hierarchical organisation of the Church, of which it was the inward life and efficacy. Christian faith had been transformed into obedient adherence to the visible Church, and participation in divine grace into participation in the sacraments. The priest had become the necessary mediator, his absolution had taken the place of the absolution of God, as the decisions of the Pope had been substituted for the inspiration of Christ. But Luther had learned by experience that this external institution of salvation, far from giving peace to the burdened and troubled heart, left it the more empty and despairing. He had found salvation in ignoring the institution and entering into personal, direct, and immediate relations with the Master of souls and the Author of life and grace. Was not this already the implicit condemnation of the whole system of human absolution, sanctimonious practices, and hierarchical pretensions?

In other quarters the deep discredit, the violent disdain with which churchmen and the institution itself had come to be regarded, constrained serious souls to seek peace and life outside of official systems and established traditions. It had become necessary to learn, willingly or unwillingly, how to distinguish the body from the soul of religion, the accessory from the essential. From that moment the Christian spirit began to

free itself from the bonds with which so-called divine jurisprudence had fettered it; to escape from prison and regain its independence.

The ideal principle of Christianity was rediscovering its ideality, asserting itself with a new consciousness of its divine transcendence; it was purifying itself from the foreign elements which still oppressed it, manifesting itself in its moral absolutism, its spiritual purity, as an entirely new life-principle which might well create new theologies, forms, religious societies, without being exhausted or absorbed by any one of them. After such a triumph over the past, the strictly religious and moral principle of Protestantism appeared to be actually susceptible of indefinite development. Here again we have nothing essentially new; that which was new in the sixteenth century was the consciousness which Christendom then gained of the vital principle of Christianity, of its purely moral essence, and its absolute independence of all historic delimitations and realisations through which it had passed and might pass yet again; it was the incorporation of the Christian principle in the moral and religious consciousness of humanity.

In the Catholic system, Christianity had been so externalised as to become a law or rite, a body politic. In Protestantism it was *interiorised* in the soul itself, and became once more an immanent moral force, the very spirit of holiness, love, and life. In the first case it engendered servitude, in the second it brought forth liberty.

Luther neither foresaw nor desired all the consequences of the principle which he introduced into the world. Trained in Middle-Age scholasticism, he was never entirely set free from it. To the daring intuitions of the prophet the man of tradition brought many a fear and many a repentance. For that matter, no principle in the practical moral order, whose consequences must be developed by life, not logic, can be revealed in all its significance at the very first. When he entered upon his preaching work Christ did not attack the Mosaic institutions nor change the religious habits of his disciples. He dropped the living seed into the earth and left to time the duty of making it germinate and ripen. It is none the

less true that in bringing religion back to inward faith, and theology to Christian experience, Luther did justify the permanent criticism of ceremonial and dogma, and for all time shattered the system of authority, at least in religion.

If he had completely succeeded in his work, Christendom in its entirety would have been set in a new path, and how different would have been the history of Europe! But revolutions are never effected without conflicts and ruptures. The Church became divided in itself. Instead of one Church there are two, which, living in perpetual conflict, have developed two forms of Christianity, two historic Christendoms, which without ceasing to be related have become none the less mutually irreconcilable.

Though in perpetual conflict, the two societies have none the less mutually interacted. The action has indeed been twofold. In the first place, Catholicism opened itself to the Protestant spirit, and the Catholic spirit reappeared in Protestantism. In the next, the two principles, by the unceasing violence of their impact, arrived each at its final logical expression; the principle of authority at infallibility concentrated in the person of the Pope; the Protestant principle at the autonomy of the Christian conscience.

It was impossible that the Church of the Middle Ages should continue to be after the Reformation that which she had been before. The crisis was salutary for her, revealing her latent energies. Those abuses and disorders which till then she had been unable to correct have in part been done away. The Council of Trent revived her discipline and reduced to something like order the chaos of her doctrines, traditions, and customs. Thence came the Catholic revival of the seventeenth century. The two most noble forms which Catholicism has ever known, the Jansenism of Port Royal and the Gallicanism of Bossuet, were in reality semi-Protestantism. For that reason, notwithstanding ardent controversies, it seemed for a moment to the greatest spirits of the time that a reconciliation and even a union of the two confessions might be possible. But the old principle could not abdicate. The Jesuits took it up and

developed it with a logic till then unknown. Jansenism and Gallicanism were eliminated, and are to-day mere heresies.

On the other hand, the Catholic spirit survived in the Protestant churches. Not only was the dogmatic tradition of the councils and the Middle Ages maintained, but no one entertained a doubt that an infallible external authority was necessary. The attempt was made to constitute it by the dogma of the infallibility of the Scriptures, and upon this foundation to build up an authoritative theology. Thus, immediately after the death of the Reformers, supervened that singular period which has been justly named the Protestant Scholasticism. It was Catholicism transposed. Nothing less than the rise of criticism, the ardour of pietism, and the triumph of rational methods, could avail to put an end to this period and bring Protestantism back into the current of its natural evolution.

The Reformation forever disorganised the old system of authority. That system rested upon two pillars: the Holy Scriptures and tradition; the clash of Catholic and Protestant polemics destroyed them both. In the name of Scripture the Protestants overthrew the authority of tradition; in the name of tradition the Catholics well-nigh annulled the Scriptures. Without tradition the Scriptures are without external support, and cannot become a dogma; they remain simply historic documents subject to the appreciation and interpretation of the individual reason.

The Protestant dogma of authority never had, nor could have, the simplicity, the plenitude, the efficacy of the Catholic dogma. For Protestantism to undertake to constitute such a dogma is a pure inconsistency. The Protestant churches do not believe themselves infallible; how, then, can they constitute an infallible canon of sacred books, or borrow such a canon without the slightest criticism from the tradition of another church, a thousand times convicted of error? A basis for doctrinal government can be drawn from the Bible only by drawing from it a confession of faith. Shall this confession of faith infallibly rule the interpretation of the Bible? We are then in very Catholicism. Or

shall the Christian remain free to appeal from the Confession of Faith to the Scriptures? Then the latter is subject to the individual reason; it is the prime source of Christian knowledge, an incomparable means of edification, but it is no longer an infallible and tyrannical authority. On the contrary, it has become the bulwark of Christian liberty.

The dogma of the infallibility of the Scriptures was therefore by no means primitive in Protestantism. The Reformation knew nothing of it in the early days. We shall explain its genesis and relate its history. But first it behoves us to ascertain what was the attitude of the Reformers toward the traditional Bible.

III

The Bible and the Reformers

The Reformers did not begin by forming a theory of the Bible and its authority, thence afterward to deduce their particular doctrines. Not only did they have no need to do so, since the authority of the Bible was strongly established and recognised by the ancient Church before their day, but furthermore, as we have seen, their initial method was anything but scholastic. They proceeded, not by the way of external authority, but by way of inward experience. Theology had become a system of jurisprudence; they brought it back into the moral sphere.

Nor did they discuss with their opponents, at least in the beginning, the question what authority may lawfully promulgate dogmas. For them the question was, What is the true, authentic Christianity, that which gives peace, regenerates, and saves? Was the Christianity of the church that of Christ and his apostles? To resolve this question the Reformers resorted to the original texts of the biblical books, just as the humanists were setting themselves to research and the study of the ancient works in order to discover the true classic antiquity and give a clear and vivid impression of it. The Reformers retraced the turbid course of the Christian stream to its source, and there quenched their thirst for right-

eousness and peace. The new life they there drank in, filling them with joy and strength, was their sufficient and ultimate warrant that the waters of this spring had their source in heaven. Their flavour demonstrated their origin with the direct and compelling light of a truth that offers itself to the soul ready to receive it. This principle of moral and religious evidence, of full inward persuasion, took that part in the reformation of the Church which intellectual evidence took in the Cartesian reform of ancient philosophy. In both cases it was the method of inward conviction putting an end to the systems and method of antiquity. Thus we see Luther and Calvin, with ingenuous and confident boldness such as their disciples no longer possess, overturning the ancient pyramid, and in the last analysis making their new theory of the authority of the Bible rest upon the original creative fact of conscience, upon the inward witness of the Spirit, and not the contrary.

That the position and attitude of the Reformers with regard to the Bible have often been deemed uncertain, obscure, or even inconsistent, is due to the fact that it is easy to glean from their writings two series of apparently irreconcilable statements. Reading one series it would be easy to conclude that, to speak their language, they identified "the Word of God" with the text, the canon, and even the letter of the biblical books, and maintained the system of a literal inspiration and a scriptural canon come down from heaven to earth all complete. So to conclude would be a great mistake. The more one supposes this to be the case the more must he be surprised and disconcerted by the daring criticism which at other times the Reformers initiated and practiced, whether with regard to the value and authority of certain books or to the formation of the canon itself. It would have been a most flagrant inconsistency on their part to base the authority of the Word of God upon the decisions of a Church whose tradition they almost wholly repudiated as a tissue of legends, superstitions, and human inventions. Into this inconsistency they did not fall.

Everything becomes in fact clear by two considerations. The first

is that their faith, being of the purely moral and religious order, clung before all things to the moral and religious substance of the Bible, and not to its letter and outward form, which are matters not of faith, but of history. As their chief purpose, one which absorbed all their thought and all their solicitude, was to lead souls to the very fountain-head of Christianity, they find no expressions vigorous enough to exalt the heavenly quality of its waters, and do not concern themselves beyond measure with the earthly basin out of which they flow. Their long desire is to save men, to set the troubled conscience free, not to resolve obscure problems of literary origin, questions of authorship and date; nor do they otherwise greatly concern themselves with nice distinctions between the content and that which contains it, between the spirit and the letter. In their preachings and polemics at least, the human imperfections of the Bible disappear in the radiant glory of its divine truth.

But this point being proved, another appears. First of all, let us look upon the Reformers with those Middle-Age Bibles which they read and studied. These traditional collections contained much more than the apostolic books. They included apochryphas, pseudepigraphs, ecclesiastical writings of widely differing values. The distinction between the proto-canonical and the deutero-canonical books was not yet wholly forgotten. It must be remembered that before the Council of Trent no Ecumenical Council had traced, with any degree of clearness, the boundary line between that which was of divine inspiration and that which was not. How could the Reformers abstain from making some examination of these traditional collections? The truth is that criticism must have come into being, and did in fact come into being, simultaneously with the doctrine of the divine authority of the Scriptures.

Once again, that which was divine in these books was "the Word of God," speaking from them to the conscience; but the idea would have occurred to no one that this Word of God was absolutely identical with the biblical collection which he might have in hand. This is evident from the manner in which Luther and Melancthon explain and determine the

content of this divine Word. It is made up of two parts: the *Law*, which reveals to man the gravity of his estate of sin, by showing him what divine justice requires of him, and the *gospel*, that is, the promise of pardon of sin and the outpouring of the spirit of life. Excellent as containing the moral and religious substance of the Scripture, this division is absolutely inapplicable to the books themselves.

It is still more important to note the new criterion which, at the very outset, Luther with frank boldness set up for the criticism of the biblical books, and whence he at once deduces a judgment regarding them. His translation of the Bible is well known: it contains prefaces in which with perfect clearness he lays down the decisive rule which each reader, learned or ignorant, should and can follow as he seeks to find in this very mingled collection his true soul-nurture, the living, substantial "Word of God." After having formulated it he immediately gives examples of its practical application to several of the most venerated books. Let us listen a moment and learn how he does it:

"Christ is the Master, the Scriptures are the servant. Here is the true touchstone for testing all the books: we must see whether they work the works of Christ or not. The book which does not teach Christ is not apostolic, were St. Peter or St. Paul its writer. On the other hand, the book which preaches Christ is apostolic, were its author Judas, Annas, Pilate, or Herod. . . John accords little space to the acts of Christ, much to his words. The other Gospels say much of his acts, less of his teaching. This is why the former is the chief Gospel, unique, most precious, the one to be preferred above all the others. In fact, the Gospel of John and his First Epistle, the Epistles of Paul, particularly those to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Ephesians, and the First Epistle of Peter, these are the books which show thee Christ and teach thee all that it is good and necessary for thee to know, though thou shouldst never hear nor see any other books. As for the others, the Epistle of James is a veritable epistle of straw, for there is nothing evangelical in it."

We may read also what the Reformer wrote of the Revelation of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and several of the Old Testament books, especially the prophets. "Without any doubt," he says, "the prophets had studied the books of Moses, and the late ones those of their predecessors, and filled with the Spirit of God they committed their good thoughts to writing. But this is not to say that these doctors, scrutinising the Scriptures, did not sometimes find wood, hay, and stubble, and not always gold, silver, or diamonds. Nevertheless the essential abides and the fire consumes the rest." [1]

Evidently Luther was thus led to open to discussion the extent and the limits of the biblical canon. The Lutheran Church has never officially settled the question; but he himself did not hesitate to introduce into his translation of the Bible, at least of the New Testament, a very marked division between books of the first degree and those of the second. Where the Reformed Confessions of Faith enumerate the canonical books according to traditional usage, they are careful to add, without exception, that these books are held and recognised as inspired by God and the norm of the faith, "not so much because of the unanimous consent of the Church, as in virtue of the inward witness and persuasion of the Holy Spirit, by whom we are made wise to discover and set apart these from other ecclesiastical books."

Even this test did not hinder Calvin from doubting the authenticity of the Second Epistle of Peter and expressing himself with a freedom not again for a long time practised, with regard to the discrepancies in the Gospel narratives, and the doubtful character of the Revelation of St. John, upon which he never commented.

It is of small importance that as Luther grew old he tempered his early warmth, or that criticism has not confirmed his especial conclusions. In many respects the Reformers were men of transition, often dominated by ideas of the past, and held by bonds which they could only

[1] Luther's "Works," Erlangen edition, vol. lxii. p. 128-133; lxiii. p. 157-379. *Cf.* xlvii., 357.

gradually break. The question is not to justify their inconsistencies, nor to swear by their words; it is to get a clear view of the new principle which they introduced into the world, and which, having destroyed the Catholic system of authority, forbade the future constitution of any other infallible external authority, and consequently of any other tyranny. Their title to fame is that they established a new conception of religion by removing the seat of religious authority from without to within, from the Church to the Christian consciousness. And this great revolution they accomplished with entire knowledge of what they were doing, and with an astounding logical firmness. We shall be convinced of this as we examine more nearly the foundation on which, with a new theory of the authority of the Bible, they dared to base the certitude of their faith.

IV

The Inward Witness of the Holy Spirit; or, The Subjective Basis of Protestantism

Let us first develop the consequences of the facts which have just been stated.

The first is that the Reformers were very far from that Protestant dogma of the exterior and absolute authority of the Bible which the succeeding age elaborated to rob the Christian conscience of that liberty which this age had so dearly bought. The distance, not to say the opposition, between the two conceptions of the Holy Scriptures is so great that in fact it is a problem how the two can be related, or how one could have proceeded from the other. The solution of this problem will be the subject of the present chapter.

The Reformers, and Luther in particular, dreamed of anything rather than of raising up an exterior authority, infallible like that of the Church, and functioning in the same manner. It never occurred to them to consider the Bible as a Codex of absolute and divine prescriptions, to

be accepted independently of their possible relation to the Christian conscience. The Catholic agrees in advance to accept all that the Church teaches or may teach, whether or not it is in conformity with his moral or religious convictions. There have been, perhaps there still are, Protestants who take this attitude with regard to the Bible, and so far, in method at least, they are still Catholics.

But Luther was very far from this passive attitude and pure faith in authority. He did not accord an equal and absolute value to all the books of the Bible. Side by side with the gold, silver, and precious stones he freely pointed out the hay and stubble with which they were sometimes mingled. From his commerce with the Scriptures, as the effect of a direct personal experience, a Christian consciousness had been formed within him, the sentiment of the inward possession of that which constitutes the pure and essential truth of Christianity. Thence came a personal certainty of faith, as far above the letter of Scripture and the canonical authority of this or that book as above the traditions of the Roman Church and the bulls and decrees of the papacy. This Christian consciouness, absolutely sure of itself, could not be subject to any external tribunal. On the contrary, it sat in judgment upon all which might claim to condemn or enslave it, including the Epistle of St. James, the Revelation of St. John, and the ritual laws of the Old Testament. In a word, Luther had gained from Scripture itself the experience of the religion of grace and justification by faith, and faith had become in him so alive, so sure of itself, and, so to speak, so evident to his consciousness, as to be free with regard to this very Scripture, and open to accord neither credit nor value to any biblical testimony which seemed to oppose it, or bring it back to a religion of law and of the merit of works before God.

To reduce all this to a more simple expression: The Christian religion is not true because it is in the Bible, but it is in the Bible because it is true. Truth reveals itself immediately to the consciousness, which, to appropriate it, may indeed have need of the Scriptures as of other

teachers, but which in the end retains and is nourished by it only because it is the truth, and the conscience recognises it intrinsically as such.

What, then, is Scripture, and what honour belongs to it? In truth a very great honour. It is not the mistress of true Christianity, but it is its servant. The servant need not be perfect; it suffices that she be faithful. Scripture is the fixation on paper of the evident Christian tradition; but because it is the earliest it is also the surest, and as the document most worthy of faith of all that we possess, forever commands the respect of all those who, like the Reformers, desire to go to the fountain-head and learn the authentic gospel from Christ and his apostles.

Yet this earliest tradition, taken as a whole, is not more secure than others from error, forgetfulness, imperfections, and additions. If it contains gold and silver, said Luther, it also has its hay and stubble. This is why it is ever subject to the criticism both of the Christian consciousness and of science. Far from excluding necessary criticism, the original principle of Protestantism requires and inaugurates it.

Examine now Luther's canon of Scripture. You will see that the distinction which he makes between the books traditionally received and the hierarchic dignity in which he classes them depends upon the essentially subjective criticism of his faith. The certitude of his faith does not rest upon a previous theory of the infallibility of Scripture; it is his theory of Scripture which rests upon the inward certitude of his faith. This is not the attenuation or transposition of Catholicism, it is its reversal and overthrow.

We have less need to explain Calvin. Called to make out of whole cloth a system of doctrines and a new church organisation, his rigorously logical mind tends by a powerful effort to establish a firm rule, an authority before which all must bow. He finds this authority in the Scriptures. But he is too logical and too perspicacious not to perceive and admit the underlying foundation on which he builds his theory. Search out this foundation. Miracles are there, prophecy,

divine inspiration. But these external proofs, including the attestation of the Fathers, are powerless and vain if they are not preceded by the inward attestation of the Spirit, the personal conviction born of the immediate contact of the soul with truth. Here again the truth makes itself directly recognised as such by its intrinsic character, as things black and white reveal their colour to the eyes, and things sweet and bitter reveal their flavour. This is what Calvin calls the inward witness of the Spirit, which, being the same as that which inspired the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, makes us immediately feel that their words are divine and true. The authority of the Scripture canon does not rest upon the authority of the Church, nor upon a demonstration made by human science, but before all things upon this witness of the Spirit. It matters little here that Calvin and his disciples were gravely mistaken as to the scope of this inward criterion, applying it with such eagerness to all the parts and all the books of the traditional Bible indiscriminately. The subjective character of both principle and criterion is not less evident.

From Zwingli we cite but a single text. "Thou seest," he said, "where the cold cavils of the Papists and the priests will end when they affirm that the meaning of the celestial Word depends upon the judgment of man. Thou canst never know what is the Church which can never err nor decay, if thou recognisest not the Word of God who constituted the Church. This Word has the virtue of giving faith in the Church, it can remove her errors, it permits the acceptance of no other (human) word. Only pious hearts know this, for faith does not depend upon the discussions of men, but has its seat, and rests itself invincibly in the soul. It is an *experience* which everyone may have. It is not a doctrine, a question of knowledge, for we see the most learned men who are ignorant of this thing which is the most salutary of all."[1] Here again the theology of experience is substituted for that of authority.

Nevertheless, the mental habits of a generation are not changed in a day. A new principle planted in old soil is long subject to the tyranny

[1] "De Vera et Fals. Rel.," vol. ii. p. 195.

of the past, and is slow to yield all its fruits. The Catholic principle was destined to reappear in the very heart of Protestantism, and there create in another form a new religion of authority by the substitution pure and simple of the external authority of Scripture for that of the Church. The Reformers themselves were not inaccessible to the temptation to simplify things by setting up in their polemics one infallibility against another.

To understand their attitude and the easily detected inconsistencies of their successive statements, we must recall the historic circumstances and conditions in which they had to do their work. They handled sword and trowel at the same time; they were obliged to make a front against the Catholics on the right hand and against the Anabaptists and Illuminati on the left. Scripture was their only weapon for separating authentic Christianity from the traditions of the Middle Ages and the extreme or immoral Utopias of contemporary sects. How should it be surprising that they exaggerated its authority, and, dropping their early discrimination between the traditional biblical collection and the Word of God, seemed often to identify them? Then, having founded a new Church, they were naturally left to give it, in the letter of Scripture, an external infallible authority, which should be in nothing inferior to that on which the rival Church plumed herself.

Thus their successors could say in their scholastic language that they had founded evangelical Protestantism upon two principles, one material, justification by faith, and one formal, the authority of the Scriptures. In reality the early Reformers knew nothing of this dualism. As has been seen, they made no distinction between the authority of the book and that of its contents. It was by its essential content, not by its extrinsic claims, that the book commanded their consciences. The inward proof, the personal experience of salvation, had with them preceded all outward demonstration, and by this inward experience the two so-called principles of Protestantism had been brought into unity. But as piety grew weak, this living unity was broken by the Doctors of the following

age. They endeavoured to eliminate from their demonstrations every subjective element; their wish was to make of Scripture, not an authentic witness of early Christianity, but a supernatural and infallible code of Christian verities, in such manner that these verities might be deduced *more juridico vel geometrico*, from the very letter of the sacred text. The constitution of the dogma of the infallibility of the Scriptures marks the advent of the period justly known as "the Protestant scholastic," which began on the very morrow of the disappearance of the Reformers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE BIBLE

I

Origin of the Idea of Inspiration

It was a great advantage for the Protestant Doctors to oppose to the authority of the Church an authority which the Church herself had consecrated. The belief that the Bible is of divine origin, and was in some sort dictated by God, is in reality older than Christianity. The primitive man cannot imagine and adore a god without spontaneously believing that the god enters into communication with his adorer. And doubtless the germ of truth in this belief is that the divine could not command our love if the Spirit of God did not naturally live in the depths of our being. But in its infancy the human race could only represent this truth under marvellous and mythological forms.

The idea of a divine inspiration vouchsafed to certain men and recognised in certain books is in no respect specifically Jewish or Christian; it is universal. The phenomena of inspiration present themselves everywhere under very much the same psycho-physiological forms: dreams,

ecstasies, prophetic fury, visions, a mere inward suggestion, a mental alienation explained by the invasion of a spirit from without. In the different stages of civilisation we invariably meet sorcerers and diviners, oracles and sibyls, prophets, legislators, priests, sages, who are supposed to have been touched by a divine breath. All that appeared extraordinary in the actions, thoughts, or utterances of a man, as well the manifestations of a mysterious malady as those of an exceptional genius, indicated the presence of a god. All ancient legislation, all the higher religions of the East, rest upon sacred books which are considered as the product of divine inspiration.

The forms of the phenomenon and the popular ideas on the subject were the same in Israel as among any other people. But with Israel religious inspiration, beginning on as low a plane, rose infinitely higher and yielded the fruits of a more exquisite and richer maturity. Side by side with these common and morbid manifestations of a passive inspiration another order of inspiration was developed, which, far from depressing the mental life of a man, carries him, as in the prophets, to its maximum of intensity. This prophetic inspiration does not in the least degree carry with it infallibility. God sometimes commands that certain revelations be put into writing, but in the work of redaction and writing there is never any question of a special divine assistance. It was only later, when the religious genius of the prophets had become extinct and the great literary epoch had closed, that a religious veneration arose for the letter of the sacred books, and then the Jews, forgetful or ignorant of what prophetic inspiration had been, conceived a belief that the entire Hebrew text, and the Hellenists that also the translation of the LXX, was the very word of God, the dictation of his Spirit. Thus by degrees the dogmatic of the schools took the place of the free poetry of the early ages. The Platonic theory of enthusiasm and divine madness formed the transition between the two. Philo applies it without scruple to the prophetic state. Human consciousness disappears when that of God comes in. Philo congratulates himself upon having had his

moments of divine ecstasy. To certain dignities, like that of the high priest, belonged the gift of unconscious inspiration. The allegorical interpretation at that time in universal use proves the general belief in the inspiration of the sacred writings. But it was also an ingenious means of preserving the freedom of the mind in the new time, and of escaping that tyranny of the letter which would have arrested all initiative and all progress. Thus exegesis saved philosophic liberty.

II

Belief in Inspiration in the Christian Church

Heirs of the Jewish tradition, the early Christians did little more than continue it. They cited the Greek version of the Old Testament with the same confidence as the Hebrew text. Jesus and his disciples looked upon the sacred books of their people in no other way than other men of their generation. Paul's reasonings upon a word in Genesis, which is in the singular instead of the plural, sufficiently show that the apostle had religiously kept what he had learned in the school of Gamaliel.[1]

Nevertheless the traditional doctrine did not fetter the consciousness of Jesus. By virtue of the immediate intuition of his consciousness, in which he found the certitude and the light of a higher revelation, he did not hesitate to put aside the letter of the law, whether as relative and transitory or as contrary to his own moral and religious inspiration. He promised his disciples a new Spirit. Their firm assurance that they had the perfect revelation in the Gospel of Christ and the gift of the Spirit which they had received naturally lifted them above earlier revelations. The Spirit gave Paul liberty to proclaim the abolition of the rule of the law, and by his subtile exegesis to find in the very code of the Old Covenant, and especially in the prophets, the gospel of the new time.

This new inspiration which gave to all the preachers of the gospel the assurance of being, and the right to claim to be, bearers of the "Word of God," gave rise to a new collection of sacred books. But in

[1] Gal. iii. 15-18.

the apostolic time no one had gone so far. No one then foresaw that a second volume would be added to the Bible. People lived in the expectation of the end of the world. Jesus had promised the Church his Spirit, not a new book. The new inspiration was not the privilege of a few chosen men, but the inalienable possession of all Christians. "He who has not received the Spirit of Christ is none of his." Far from creating distinctions, this universal inspiration established a real unity. For this reason the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the man who has received the Spirit, ὁ πνευματικός, judges of all things and is judged by no man, and to the Thessalonians, "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Christianity, therefore, enters the world not as the religion of a new servitude, but as the religion of the inward freedom of the soul.

This apostolic inspiration did not put those whom it touched beyond the possibility of human fallibility. Paul at Antioch was obliged to rebuke Peter severely for a moral error. He himself carefully distinguishes between the eternal religious verity, the very commandments of Christ, and his own individual views. He supposes the possibility of an error of memory from his pen; he declares that he is constantly making progress in knowledge of the truth; he modifies his early ideas upon many points and ingenuously confesses that he considers his present knowledge as imperfect, destined to give place to more light and greater accuracy. We perceive the same modest human consciousness in other sacred writers, who give us glimpses of their travail of thought in composing their works. Luke had certainly received the Spirit of God. But read again the prologue to his Gospel: does he speak otherwise than as a good historian of his time, who has carried on a process of research and criticism in order to give a more full and accurate account than those given by his predecessors? Is there a single one of these writers—save perhaps the author of the Apocalypse, faithful in this respect to the literary class in which he works—is there a single one, I ask, who did not write for the occasion, in view of the requirements of circumstances,

or who presents his work as a divine writing, to be added to the canon of the Old Testament?

These writings, therefore, have no appearance of being the authorised publication of divine oracles; they appear as the spontaneous production of a great classic literature, born of a profound religious faith, of a powerful common inspiration, but in which the general unity does not exclude a diversity of genius, of thought, and of style, and in which are not lacking, side by side with beautiful thoughts and striking truths, imperfections of form, errors of detail, traces of former prejudices, and long superannuated methods of exegesis and reasoning.

From the middle of the second century everything is changed. By degrees, as documents of primitive Christianity came into use for reading in public worship side by side with the books of the Old Testament, they were classed in the same category, and the same Philonian conception of inspiration was applied to them. In them, as in the writings of the prophets, they heard the lyre or the cithera, the heavenly musician, the divine Logos, singing to the glory of God. It is impossible to imagine a more complete annihilation of human individuality, and modern theories of inspiration have devised nothing more extreme.

But it would be a mistake to seek to extract from the poetic imaginings of this period a fixed and clearly defined doctrine of inspiration. Side by side with propositions and arguments which seem to imply a literal theopneusty, we find others, sometimes by the same Church Father, which prove how great was still the liberty and how loose and uncertain the theory. Clement of Alexandria placed philosophy beside the law, and the sages on a par with the prophets. Justin Martyr and Theophilus of Antioch no more doubted the divine character of the Sibylline Oracles than of the prophecies of Isaiah. Tertullian held that every edifying book was divinely inspired. Origen went farther: he clearly distinguished in the Scriptures portions of highly unequal inspiration and value. Even Augustine, though he said that the style of the Holy Spirit was everywhere recognisable, and that a divine grace had placed

the sacred writers above all possibility of error, nevertheless asserted that this supernatural assistance had not given them the power of overstepping the natural limits of human intelligence, and that they spoke, as men, of divine things.

Warned by the prophetic excesses of Montanism, Catholic theologians laid less emphasis upon the theory of the "divine madness." The intense spirit of Tertullian might find satisfaction in saying that God speaks by the mouth of man, when the man himself knows not what he says, but the Alexandrians found it more easy to conceive of inspiration as an act of the *Logos*, which, far from annihilating the natural faculties of the mind, has the effect of making them more acute, more clear, and more apt to attain to truth.

The limits of inspiration remained especially uncertain. Neither Church Fathers nor councils could agree upon the number of the books which are the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, nor upon the marks by which they may be known. A certain book, the "Shepherd of Hermas," for example, regarded by some as a divine revelation, is branded by others as the breviary of adultery. The Revelation of St. John, generally venerated in Western Christendom, is slighted in Alexandria as an apocryphal work. It is precisely the other way with the Epistle to the Hebrews, down to the Synod of Carthage (397). Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and others cite as the Word of God gospels since then lost. The still extant lists of the canonical books from the second to the fifth century offer surprising disparities.

They got over the difficulty by the distinction which became current between the writings called *homologoumena*, or generally received, and *antilegomena*, or works of doubtful authenticity or disputed authority. The method of the Antioch school, more historical and grammatical than that of Alexandria, finally arrived at a more clear-cut and thoroughgoing criticism. Theodore of Mopsuestia, if we are to believe his accusers, questioned the sacred character of several books of the Old and New Testaments, such as the Song of Songs and the Epistle of James,

carried the Psalms of David to the times of Zerubabel and Ezekiel, and despoiled the majority of them of their prophetic meaning by interpreting them according to Jewish ideas.

The arguments for the divinity of biblical inspiration were not less diverse and indecisive. It is not difficult to understand the reason for the prevailing uncertainty upon so capital a doctrine, and the languid interest felt in escaping from it. By declaring herself infallible the Church had made herself the object of faith. She had become the highest authority in questions of doctrine and discipline. People no longer believed in the Church because of Scripture, but in Scripture because of the authority of the Church, as St. Augustine said.

This is why nothing was decided during the Middle Ages. The time produced opinions of the loosest character, side by side with those of the strictest. Scholasticism was as incapable of criticism as of exegesis.

Both sciences emerged, modestly enough at first, with the Renascence, and put in circulation more liberal ideas and especially a more serious method. Erasmus held that the apostles, though animated by the Holy Spirit, were none the less fallible men, and that without injury to the gospel they were mistaken in certain matters and ignorant in others. And finally the opinions of Luther concerning the prophets and a certain number of supposed apostolic writings—opinions set forth in the preceding chapter—show how free was the Christian conscience in the early years of the Reformation with regard to the traditional canon.

We must then conclude that, prepared in various ways in the synagogue and the Church, the dogma of the authority of the Bible was not yet defined and constituted at the close of the Middle Ages, either as regards the theory of inspiration or concerning the contents of the second collection. Up to this time the Church had sufficed for everything. It was quite otherwise with the communities born of the Reformation. The authority of the Scriptures being put in opposition to that of the ancient Church and her tradition, it became necessary to define the characteristics of this supreme authority. The task of the

Protestantism of that day was to return to the doctrine so inconsistently elaborated in the past, to unify it and carry it to its ultimate conclusion. At no less a cost could the Bible be transformed into an external infallible authority. The complete development of the new dogma took place in two periods. The first is represented by the Protestant Confessions of Faith; the second by the construction of the orthodox theory in the seventeenth century.

III

The Principle of the Dogma

THE *principle* of the Protestant dogma of authority in matters of faith was first officially laid down in the Confessions of Faith of the sixteenth century.

In the first thought of their authors the symbols neither had nor ought to have any normative authority in themselves. They were not decretals, but mere historic expositions drawn up with express apologetic purpose, to refute the calumnies of some and to deny all complicity with the excesses of others. By them the Protestants desired to make known to princes and peoples what in reality they were and what they believed. The Confession of Faith presented by Melancthon at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 had no other purpose. The same motive caused Calvin to take up the pen in 1534. The first edition of the "Christian Institutes," addressed to Francis I, was an extended Confession of Faith. The Calvinistic Confessions of Faith are abridged "Christian Institutes."

These documents based their authority neither on themselves nor on the authority of the men or the synods that issued them, but solely upon the Word of God, the doctrine of which, to the exclusion of any other authority, they claimed to reproduce. Necessarily, therefore, they insisted above all upon the authority of this Word, the supremacy of which no other authority, whether of heaven or earth, could call in question;

and this they all did unanimously, with a humility and a tenacity alike extraordinary. Expressing themselves in popular style and in brief statements, they necessarily dropped out those distinctions which all the Reformers made between the Word of God and the traditional biblical collection formed and preserved by the Roman Catholic Church. They took no pains to lay down a theory of divine inspiration, which at that time was contested by no one; they did not measure its degrees nor describe its forms, nor did they define the true relation between the divine doctrine and the human text, between the content and that which contained it. Exhilarated by the liquor, they took no note of the goblet that contained it, but passing over the accessories, and obeying the demand, at that epoch universal, for an infallible external authority, they boldly identified the Word of God with the traditional Bible and emphatically uttered the brief formula: "The canonical Scriptures are the very word of God, and this Word proves itself to be true and salutary, not by the human witness of the Church, but by the divine witness of the Holy Spirit in the conscience."

Doubtless there was here some incoherence which the discussions of the following age would bring out. There is neither parity nor homogeneity between a literary fact, such as the divers historical collections of the early Christian books, gropingly made by men sometimes unenlightened and sometimes biassed, and the essentially subjective moral and religious fact of doctrinal evidence. To draw a conclusion from one to the other is logically impossible. I never cease to marvel, for example, that the inward witness of the Holy Spirit was able to designate to the French Reformers of 1559 the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, and no doubt the thirty-nine of the Old Testament also, and that the list which they drew up in the Confession, called of La Rochelle, has not one book less nor one book more than that most generally received in the Roman Catholic Church; or that the question of the apocryphal books could be so easily settled in the same way. The two facts are not in the same order. One has to do with moral and religious experience,

the other with history and literary criticism. Later they were necessarily disjoined by the progress of biblical learning. Protestant theologians became convinced, at heavy cost, that it is impossible to base an external authority, infallible *a priori*, upon a subjective fact of moral experience. But, at the time we are now considering, no one had any suspicion of this, except perhaps Luther in his moments of clairvoyance and intellectual freedom.

No one among the Reformers handled the old Scriptural argument, "*It is written*," with more decision and vigour than Luther. No one more firmly believed in the divine origin and inspiration of the Scriptures. But neither was anyone more at liberty with regard to the letter and the form of the traditional collection. He literally inaugurated biblical criticism; and if his work in this direction was not carried farther, it was because he had no successor. The inspiration of the Scriptures was with him not a dogma, an intellectual theory established before the reading of the books, but a religious fact, a moral conviction created and continually renewed during the reading by the immediate contact of the conscience with the truth of God. Thence came the inspired character of his faith, its invincible assurance and serene liberty.

Between the Lutheran symbols and those of the French Reformers there is this difference: that the former, unlike the latter, never enumerate the canonical books, nor give any lists of them. Indeed they could not. Their authors would not repudiate the classification made by Luther himself in his translation of the Bible, and they dared not sanction it. They tacitly let the stream of custom and ancient tradition flow over the Reformer's work and efface it.

The Reformation Fathers considered the Bible from within; they embraced the saving doctrines, the religious marrow of the book, without concerning themselves about the history of the text and the formation of the canon. Their successors considered the Bible from without, in the extrinsic qualities which demonstrate its divine origin and permitted them to claim for it an implicit and anticipated faith in all that it may

contain, previous to examination and experience. Thus they fell into the old rut of Catholicism and sought, like it, to build up a religion of authority.

To the early Reformers the proposition, "The Bible is the Word of God" was the shout of the soul saved from sin and death, set free from all outward servitude, bound solely by the inward monitions of the Spirit of God. With their successors the same proposition became an abstract theorem, a truth of logic from which one had only to deduce the consequences. The exterior authority of the letter of the Bible took the place of the authority of the Church; and by the same syllogistic and deductive method—like jurists with an undebatable code—the theologians with marvellous facility drew from it all their doctrines, and built upon it a system which was only a new Catholicism, acephalous and inconsequential. Let us examine how they did it.

IV

The Construction of the Dogma

If we ask why the distinction between the canonical Scriptures and the Word of God made by the early Reformers remained unfruitful, and even gave place before long to its opposite, the identification of the two terms pure and simple, we shall find another reason than that drawn from the circumstances of the hour and the facilities and advantages which such a simplification gave to Protestant polemics. Something was going on analogous to what we saw in the second century, when the Christian religion, the transcendent principle of inspiration and life, became so incarnated and imprisoned in a visible, organised Church as even to be identified with it. All religions of authority end thus in materialising their object in a sensible form, because in no other way can their authority become external and palpable. For the same reason the word of God, or the inward revelation of God to the conscience, was in the seventeenth century materialised and imprisoned in the traditional letter

and Codex of Scripture, so that the two terms were used interchangeably without the slightest distinction or reserve.

And this result was almost forced by the too intellectual conception of the "Word of God" held by the Reformers and by them transmitted to their successors.[1] By this term they understood above all else a doctrine (*doctrina divina*) supernaturally revealed to men by God. A doctrine cannot do without its adequate expression, for when ill expressed it is no longer true. Where should the adequate and perfect expression of the divine doctrine be sought, if not in the Bible?

This being so, the Bible, which until then had been only a historic instrument for arriving at the discovery of true Christianity, which they sought to restore to the Church, was changed into a code of divine verities, itself divine, into a supernatural manual of pure religion, and, by the same act, notwithstanding all protests that might arise, this religion, like Catholicism entirely expressed and inclosed in a sacred code with its authentic formulas, necessarily took on the form of a legal religion, and was in danger of losing its specifically evangelical character.

Once entered upon this downward path, Protestantism must keep on to the foot. The Bible, literally defined as the Word of God, was as much opposed to the claims of the human reason as to those of the Catholic Church. To accord to the reason and conscience of man the smallest faculty or competence to distinguish between the human parts and the divine parts, between things obligatory and things not binding, would be at once to destroy its sovereign authority and leave conscience and reason with the last word in every discussion. Quenstedt was right: "If in the canonical books anything has come from a human being, and not from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the certitude and stability of the entire Scriptures would be imperilled, its full divine authority would be destroyed, and our whole faith would become insecure."

Catholics did not find the same necessity for pushing the dogma of the Scriptures to its extreme conclusion. Side by side with Scripture

[1] Luther, in Rothe, "Zur Dogmatik," p. 127.

they had the authority of the Church, which served as foundation for the Scriptures themselves. They were therefore at first better disposed than Protestants to make concessions to the new-born criticism. Not only did Jesuits like Bellarmin explicitly recognise human collaboration in the historical books of the Bible, but others even granted that certain errors might have crept into it. We may observe with what truly Norman irony Richard Simon speaks of the anxiety of the Protestant doctors, who rest everything on the integrity and infallibility of the text of Scripture, while learned Catholics, knowing that their faith is fixed upon another foundation, give themselves up to research without disquietude or scruple.

Protestant theology did not revise its theory of inspiration until after it had rigorously worked out the conclusions of that theory. Properly speaking, the Scriptures had only one author, God himself, or, preferably perhaps, the Holy Spirit. Doubtless, to put his Word into writing, God must needs make use of human hands. But these human writers were only instruments, secretaries; more correctly still, *calami*, pens, by means of which the divine author wrote. There is no question here of an inward illumination, enlightening these human organs of the Holy Spirit. That was needless, since they had no part nor responsibility in what they wrote; their inspiration consisted in the good will with which they lent their hands to the master who asked for them. They were not unconscious, but, save for the mechanical act of writing, entirely passive. They may have understood what they set down, but that was not necessary, and indeed was not always the case, as several of them avow, and as was proved by the example of Balaam's ass.

The Bible is a letter from God; form and matter, ideas and words, addressed from heaven to men. Inspiration is conceived as a supernatural dictation.

In this act Protestant scholasticism distinguishes three moments: the command to take the pen and write (*impulsus ad scribendum*), the revelation of that which is to be written (*suggestio rerum*), and the sugges-

tion of the words in which the divine thought must be formulated (*suggestio verborum*). Thus nothing is left to chance or human fallibility. God himself is responsible for the whole.

Arrived at this point the theory was confronted with evident facts, and was obliged to come to an understanding with them. Between different parts of Scripture there are discrepancies and even contradictions; in any case there are varieties of style. How reconcile varieties or contrasts with the unity of the principal author, that is, God? The first and least dangerous expedient was to refer everything to the will of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, liberal dispenser of tongues of every sort, gives to each one that which he prefers or deems best suited to his design. But at this point students began to wonder that each biblical writer spoke precisely in the style and with the forms of reasoning already known and determined by the culture and habits of mind of his own time. To explain this astounding invariable agreement it was then said that the Holy Spirit, in choosing his expressions and forms of speech, took account of the individuality and degree of culture of each of his organs, leaving him free to speak and write as he would have spoken and written if he had been left to his own genius. This first concession was dangerous indeed.

Another difficulty. Neither the Old nor the New Testament is written in Hebrew or Greek of perfect grammatical purity. The Church Fathers, Bossuet, and almost all the great preachers, have eloquently insisted upon the contrast between the sublimity of their teachings and the rudeness or poverty of their utterance. Erasmus and the humanists give no different judgment. But in the theory of verbal inspiration, set up by the Protestant theologians, such barbarisms, solecisms, faults of declension and syntax as were discovered in one or another biblical writing became a stumbling-block. They sought to put it out of the way either by more subtile distinctions or by the most startling expedients. There was a long polemic between the purists, so-called because they maintained that the Bible from cover to cover was

irreproachably correct, and those who made the indispensable concessions to philology and grammar. On the side of orthodox dogmatics the debate was closed by the paradoxical assertion: "The style of Holy Scripture is tainted by no grammatical vice nor any barbarism or solecism." The grave fact here is not the question, but the answer which it was deemed necessary to make to it.

They could not stop at asserting the inspiration of the words: it became necessary to go on even to that of the syllables, the vowels, and consonants. The occasion was this:

A learned Hebraist, professor in the Protestant Academy of Saumur, discovered and published the fact that the vowel points of the Masoretic writings are relatively of more recent date than the Hebrew text, which was at first constituted with consonants only. The vowel points are the work of Jewish rabbis who invented them about the beginning of the Middle Ages, to fix the pronunciation of the text. Great was the distress among the strict partisans of plenary inspiration. If the vowel points were not inspired the text itself became uncertain, and the perfection and authority of the Bible were gravely attacked. The two Buxtorfs placed their colossal erudition at the service of the orthodox thesis to refute the discovery made by criticism. They succeeded very ill. But dogmatics came once more to the rescue with an arbitrary solution of a problem of literary history. The latest Reformed symbol proclaimed the antiquity of the vowel points and the entire inspiration of the sacred text, with regard to the vowels as well as the consonants.

It was necessary to maintain that the Scriptures were exempt from error not only in matters of doctrine and morals, but in matters of history, geography, cosmology, and onomastics; and as Rome had condemned Galileo, so Wittenburg and Geneva, in the name of the dogma, denied all discoveries which seemed to imperil the verbal infallibility of the sacred text. Roman intolerance had been odious, but the claims of Protestant scholasticism became ridiculous.

With such inconsistencies was the new orthodoxy afflicted that the

liberal studies which theology had encouraged were about to turn to her confusion. If the text of the Bible is divine, it is impossible to apply too much zeal and patience to the task of restoring its original and authentic form. The only editions in existence had been printed from a small number of manuscripts, nearly all very recent. Who could guarantee that the successive copies, made in the course of centuries, had remained true to the original? Men set themselves, with an ardour never since relaxed, to the search for other manuscripts and to the minute collation of all the textual witnesses. The number of the various or new readings thus accumulated by such men as Estienne, Beza, Richard Simon, Mill, and Wettstein soon mounted up into the tens of thousands. But what avails the literal inspiration of words and syllables if, by the act of ignorant, inattentive, or even biassed copyists the text has come down to us corrupted, or at least uncertain? Is the work of the Holy Spirit to be made of no avail by the stupidity or the perversity of men? The case was grave. How should it be resolved? There was but one choice: either to proclaim the divine character of the *textus receptus*, published by the Elzevirs in the seventeenth century, or to accept the results of biblical criticism with all their consequences. Neither of these solutions was satisfactory. The authority of the so-called "received text" after all rested only upon a bookseller's announcement, and criticism, becoming daily bolder, was destined to give the death-blow to the dogmatic theory of inspiration.

The question of the biblical canon and its authentic limits gave rise to still graver questions. The apocryphal books of the Old Testament, preserved in the German Bibles, had been severely excluded from the Reformed Bibles. When the Catholics accused the Protestants of mutilating the divine Scriptures they retorted with the accusation that the Catholics had added to it works purely human and unauthoritative. Caught between the Catholic Church whose tradition it could not accept without committing suicide, and the independent criticism whose researches it feared, Protestant orthodoxy found itself in a no-thorough-

fare. How could it know whether in the existing collection were to be found all the books written by the Holy Spirit, or whether among those actually there might not be found some unauthentic or interpolated books? Those who read the Old Testament attentively could detect in it allusions to several prophetic books which we do not possess, and in the New it is certain that some Epistles of Paul, now lost, are wanting. To all questions concerning the integrity or the authenticity of the books of the Bible they were fain, then, to reply by an act of faith in the Providence of God, who, having made the gift of his Word to men, would not permit it to be altered, or any part of it to be lost.

The question of the authenticity of the ancient Scriptures, which since that time has provoked so many controversies and researches, seemed to these theologians of minor importance. If God is in fact the sole responsible author of the biblical writings, what matter the names or the persons of those who merely held the pen? What does it matter that they should have been eye-witnesses or have immediate knowledge of the facts that they related, since they wrote not from the memory of things they knew, but as God dictated to them.

Therefore, to prove the divinity of the Bible, they did not start, like orthodox teachers of modern times, with the authenticity of the individual writings in the Bible and the veracity of their authors. Proofs of this nature, whether historic or moral, can only support a human faith in Holy Scripture; a likelihood, a probability which will never equal the divine certitude in which alone the Christian conscience can find rest and satisfaction. "If we will indeed minister to the needs of consciences," said Calvin, "and hinder them from wandering and vacillating in doubt and perpetual instability, we must seek the ground for our conviction in something higher than human reasonings, opinions, or conjectures, I mean in the witness of the Holy Spirit. Just as God alone can be the sufficient witness to his Word, so the Word will find no faith in the hearts of men until it has been certified and sealed by the inward witness of the Spirit."

The true demonstration of the divinity of the Scriptures is, therefore, an inward revelation taking place in the consciousness at the moment of reading, and making the truth appear as the sunlight. We know that light is light by the mere fact that it gives us light. So the old theology never undertook to demonstrate by reasonable proofs the essential dignity of the Bible. It left it to justify itself to the consciousness, for it has in itself, as Calvin said, the faculty of showing its truth as things white or black of showing their colour, and things bitter or sweet of showing their flavour.

There is in fact nothing to oppose to this appeal to experience, to moral and religious evidence. But this evidence, offered by the Holy Spirit to pious souls, is a subjective principle like that of philosophy or morals. How can it serve as the basis of an external material authority? Here is the fallacy, the weak point of Protestant scholasticism.

Furthermore, the witness of the Spirit in the conscience is in the essentially moral and religious order, and only by persuasion and sophistry can it be extended to questions of history and literature. When from a religious impression we derive a conclusion as to the authenticity of a document or the truth of a narrative, it is as if one were to draw, from the moral impression made upon him by the "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles or Shakspeare's "Hamlet," objective and positive conclusions as to the actual history of the city of Thebes or the kingdom of Denmark. The grandeur of the figure of Abraham or the psychological beauty of the drama of Eden no more proves the historicity of the narratives of Genesis than the pathos of the farewell of Hector and Andromache or the prayer of Priam at the knees of Achilles proves that of Homer's Iliad. They are things of different orders, between which there is no common measure, and the questions arising in each order must be solved by essentially different processes.

Finally, the ecclesiastic theory of Scripture is completed and summed up in the enumeration of mystic qualities or virtues of Scripture (*affec-*

tiones scripturæ sacræ) as Catholic dogma in the marks or notes of the Church. The two principal attributes of the Bible, to which it is easy to refer all the others, are infallibility, which bases its absolute authority on a fact of doctrine, and efficacy, that is, its power to create and foster the new life in the soul. But this is not to be limited to a natural efficacy such as that of every good book. What our theologians claim is a supernatural influence exerted by the Bible, an influence which does not consist in its moral power to persuade or instruct, but in the creative power of the Spirit, immanent in a metaphysical and essential way in the biblical text itself. The Bible is the mysterious incarnation of the Spirit. The Word was not only made flesh, it was made Scripture; it is in the sacred volume as Christ is in the Eucharist, as the soul is in the body, and the reading of the Bible acts divinely upon the soul after the manner of the sacrament.

V

Protestant and Catholic Dogmas of Authority Compared

The two dogmas were in repeated collision during nearly two centuries; but beneath the obvious differences and through the most obstinate controversies there were underlying analogies continually drawing them together and tending toward their reconciliation.

The two religious systems are of one family; both are systems of authority. They have the same starting point, and, at least theoretically, are constructed upon the same deductive model.

Their common starting point is the notion of an external divine revelation, consisting in a doctrine or an institution decreed by God and supernaturally communicated to men as an external law to command the intelligence and the will. That man had need of an infallible authority and that this authority, with the absolute submission which it implies, constituted the very substance of religion, was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries one of the traditional axioms which are never

discussed, one of those idol ideas of which Bacon speaks, which tyrannise over the best minds until the day when men gain courage to examine them.

On both sides men reasoned in the same way, with the same *a priori* deduction from the same syllogisms. It was not enough that God should give his revelation to man. The gift would have been useless and vain if it had not been received entire and without alloy. God, therefore, would surely provide that the heavenly stream from the fountain of salvation should not be corrupted by its course through the human channels by which it must be distributed among men down to the last human generation. These necessary channels are oral tradition and Scripture. Both must be canonised and made sacred. The Catholics had made haste to do so, and the Protestants, unable to deny that the Word of God had first been preached and propagated by the human voice before being written, could not but canonise oral tradition, at least in its first period, in the very fact of insisting upon all that was surest and most stable in Scripture. So far the two systems went hand in hand.

Here, however, they parted; one attached itself to the tradition of the Church, to which it subordinated the Scriptures, the other to the Scriptures, to which it subordinated tradition. But on neither side was disavowal complete or fundamental. The Protestants preserved the symbols of the ancient Church and the decrees of ecumenical councils, and defended them—witness the stake of Servetus—with an intolerance as great as that of the Catholics of their time. The Catholics no more rejected Scripture than the Protestants; they simply claimed, as Bossuet said to Claude, that the Church understood and interpreted it better than the individual sense of a few doctors or a few believers. Upon miracles, prophecy, inspiration, the Incarnation, expiation, the Trinity, upon the most important dogmas of the Christian religion, to the general Christian consciousness of that epoch, the harmony between the two parties was complete and profound. How then shall we be surprised when great and sincere spirits like Bossuet, Leibnitz, and many others esteemed

a reconciliation as not only desirable, but possible, and bent their best efforts to bring it to pass? There was a difference of quantity, not of quality, between the two systems. They might, then, hope to reduce it to nothing by reciprocal concessions.

The peacemakers were mistaken, it is true; they did not perceive, under Catholic forms which were persistent in Protestantism, the new principle, introduced into the world by the Reformation, which was obscurely working in the Protestant consciousness and bringing to shipwreck all these benevolent attempts at conciliation. But if one takes into account simply the doctrinal system of orthodoxy of the time, it is impossible not to admit the evident analogies of thought and reasoning. The Protestants were led to establish the infallibility of the Scriptures along the same path by which the Catholics established that of the Church. The Holy Spirit, who for the latter was incarnated and imprisoned in tradition and the hierarchy, was for the former likewise incarnated and imprisoned in the letter of the Bible. From both starting-points the same result was reached, the constitution of an external authority regarded as divine, for which implicit faith and unreserved submission were imperatively claimed in the name of the divine majesty itself, whatever the Bible might teach on any of its pages, or the Church decree at any moment of its history.

The Catholic is bound to believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, not because he is convinced that this doctrine is true, but because the Church has so ordained; in like manner the Protestant ought to believe in demoniacal possession and in the mythological or anthropomorphic figure of Satan, because the Bible so teaches. In both cases Christian dogmas are drawn from these two primordial dogmas which include them all, by the way of authority and deductive form, the shortest and most simple of all logical forms. In both cases Christianity, enjoined by an exterior law, renounces its original character, that of being the inspiration of the conscience, a free and living soul-power (δύναμις θεοῦ), and descends to the rank of a legal religion.

To turn to those things in which they are unlike. The Catholic system finds divine infallibility in an admirably organised social institution, with its supreme head, the Pope; the Protestant system finds infallibility in a book. And from whatever point of view we examine the two systems, the advantage is incontestably on the Catholic side.

The Church has this first superiority over the Bible: that it is a social organism, alive, contemporaneous, flexible, able to deal with all the new questions, to develop itself skilfully without inconsistency, thanks to the principle of inspiration which it carries within itself. It can show itself tolerant of all that it cannot prevent, can close its eyes to all that it is best not to see; in short, in ruling the minds of men it can conduct itself with all the freedom, prudence, and patience of governments which are sure that time is working for them. The Bible, on the contrary, is a document of the past, a book whose form and ideas are those of a certain date, and respond to a definite degree of culture and state of civilisation. Let no one object to this, that its spirit is a spirit of life. The question here is not of the Christian spirit, which is indeed independent of the letter of Scripture, but of the letter itself, which Protestant orthodoxy holds to be the pure and very Word of God, to which it would bind its adherents as to a divine law, the eternal expression of the truth. This being so, we surely must feel that the system of the infallible authority of a book is much less easy to maintain, much more difficult to practise, than that of the infallible authority of a Church. In fact, if Protestantism were indeed the intellectual tyranny of a book, we should not say that it had not long to live; we should say that for the past two centuries it had ceased to live, instead of being to-day the religious form of those peoples who are most advanced in scientific culture and in Christian civilisation.

In the second place, the Catholic system has much more grandeur than the other. It is one thing to reason on the value of a book, and another to create, through eighteen centuries of history, by an uninterrupted series of efforts and conflicts, a religious empire like that of

Rome. This system is the work of bishops, monks, Popes, politics, quite as much as of the doctors. It was born and grew up in the very thick of the human conflict, rendering services to modern humanity and bringing upon it evils and dangers alike extraordinary. Without the slightest doubt, as we have shown, the dogmatic and religious claims of Catholicism are fictions or legends; but the Catholic Church is assuredly a political reality with which the potentates of the time cannot refuse to reckon, and one of the grandest spectacles in history is the slow growth of the power of the Popes and the formation of that wonderful and terrible governmental machine which extends over more than one-third of Christendom.

What is the Protestant system beside all this? A tissue of abstractions peaceably chained together by a logical link in the closets of doctors or within the precincts of the Schools; a system which has never succeeded in establishing itself seriously either in the Churches or in lay society, an artificial and contradictory work, lacking at once basis and conclusion, destroyed by the very Reformation principle whence men have sought to deduce it. What use is there, indeed, in postulating the divine inspiration of an ancient text and its infallibility to an *iota* if at the present time this text, written in languages long dead, is accessible only to a few learned philologues; if the Christian people must content themselves with versions in the vulgar tongues which are neither infallible nor perfect, or with the words of preachers subject to all human frailties? If errors and imperfections in the sermons or in modern versions of the Bible do not prevent souls from attaining salvation, why should we insist that if they should exist in the original text, the text had not, and could not have had, the same salutary virtue?

The Protestant dogma of the infallibility of the Bible is not only inconceivable to thought—it is also useless in fact.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROGRESSIVE DISSOLUTION OF THE DOGMA

I

The Basis of the Dogma Displaced

THE Protestant system was barely completed when its fragility became evident. An attempt was made to strengthen it by altering its basis; but this only hastened its destruction.

Its basis, as we have seen, was the inward witness of the Holy Spirit certifying to the Christian soul that the Scriptures were "the Word of God." But everywhere men felt a blind desire for an external authority, well defined and strong, which they might set over against the Catholic Church. The inward witness, belonging to the subjective moral order, often obscure, uncertain, and fluctuating, could not set up such an authority without doing violence to its own nature. How was it possible to make the Holy Spirit the judge of controversies over questions of text, canon, historic criticism, without making it an oracle of ignorance and fanaticism?

The Arminians and Socinians intervened here. By what signs, they asked, can you make sure that the voice which you take for that of the Holy Spirit is not a vain imagination, the echo of your own prejudices, or even the suggestion of a spirit of blindness and error?[1] If you intrench yourself in your personal conviction, justifying it by no reason, could not the Jew say of his Bible, the Mohammedan of his Koran, all that you say of your sacred Scriptures? These are comprised of different parts of very unequal value; are all their pages equally edifying? Do they all awaken in the Christian consciousness the immediate assurance that they proceed from God? Are not those who believe themselves

[1] Episcopius, "Inst. Theol.," Pars iv., sect. 1, *c.* 5, Amsterdam, ed. 1650, p. 235. P. Bayle, Comm. phil. upon the words, "Compel them to come in."

to have the witness of the Holy Spirit within themselves, like a supernatural voice, the victims of a very common psychological illusion, which a little reflection and analysis would at once dissipate?[1]

Those who first advanced these objections had no desire to destroy the dogma. Quite the contrary; they believed themselves to be reconstructing it upon a firmer basis. To establish the divine authority of the Scriptures, they said, we need resort neither to the external decisions of the Catholic Church, whose traditions are without authority, nor to the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, which is illusory. The two modes of demonstration are equally supernatural and irrational; it is enough to have recourse to history. We can prove the authenticity of the biblical books by historic testimony and purely rational argument; from their authenticity we may deduce the truth of the miraculous history which they contain, and in this history we find the divine warrant of their origin. In terms of the schools this is to found the *fides divina* of the Bible, its divine authority, upon the *fides humana*, the veracity of historic witnesses.[2]

This new theory, the direct reverse of seventeenth-century orthodoxy, has become the current orthodoxy of our own time.

The chain of reasoning is as follows: the books of the New Testament, especially the Four Gospels and the Epistles of Paul, are by the authors whose names they bear. Of this a very well-grounded tradition, going back to their time, leaves no room for doubt. These writers *were able* to know the truth about Christ, and they *were willing* to tell it. They were able: for they had been the companions of his life, the witnesses of his acts, and the hearers of his discourses. They were willing; since to suppose otherwise is absurd. Therefore, the miracles of Jesus, and especially his resurrection from the dead, are established facts. But such facts could not have taken place without the supernatural inter-

[1] Reimarus, in the Fragment, "Unmoeglichkeit einer Offenbarung," p. 39, 118.

[2] Episcopius, *ibid.* Limborch, "Theol. christ.," I. 4, 6; F. Socinus, "De Auctorit. Sacr. Scripturæ."

vention of God. God himself, therefore, has attested that Jesus of Nazareth is his Son and that his teaching came from heaven. That they might receive it, guard it, and transmit it in its original purity, the apostles received the Spirit of God, who kept their tongues and pens from all error. Add to all these miracles the fulfilment of the prophecies, and you have established by exterior material proof the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments.

Thus, it was thought, the dogma of authority was saved. The contrary very soon became evident. It was not necessary to possess great scientific acumen in order to perceive the insufficiency of the deduction and realise the fragility of the links of which it is composed. How could it be hoped to gain anything by putting the testimony of men in the place of the divine witness of the Holy Spirit? What is man, that he should be the sufficient security for God? The famous dilemma " neither deceivers nor deceived " is so weak and so loosely constructed that the whole reality of human history, a tissue of prejudices, illusions, unconscious errors, ignorances, and preconceptions, easily passes through it.

Then arose historic criticism with Louis Cappel, Spinoza, Richard Simon, Jean Leclerc, Grotius, and many others; it soon showed that nothing is more obscure, complex, almost insoluble, than those questions of the date and authorship of the biblical books, most of which are anonymous. And were the solution of these problems of literary history easier than it is, how overlook the fact that historic knowledge, by its very nature, never arrives at absolute certainty, but simply at a higher or lower degree of likelihood and probability; that therefore there is an incompatibility between it and religious faith, which demands perfect certainty? How should the latter be subordinated to the former? Where shall the assurance of salvation be found, if salvation depends upon the result of my critical researches? What shall simple believers, ignorant Christians, do, if their peace of conscience depends upon questions which the learned never cease to discuss, and which they themselves cannot understand, much less answer?

We hear Lessing rebelling against the pedantic conditions imposed upon Christian faith: "Cease trying to suspend in your spider-webs the weight of an eternal destiny of joy or torment! Did the old scholasticism ever inflict graver wounds upon religion than this historic exegesis? It cannot be true that a misstatement or delusion can be found in the biblical writers! It cannot be true that among the thousands and thousands of things which we have no reason to doubt, a single imaginary or erroneous thing can be found! But if this possibility exists, what becomes of all your deductions? Would it not have been better to leave these new weapons of yours to rust in their arsenals? How, indeed, can accidental facts become necessary truths, unless they are the expression of moral or religious verities already existing in the human understanding? Between history and metaphysics there is an impassable gulf. You present to me the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I may very probably be unable to refute the accounts given by the biblical writings. But what conclusion will you draw from my inability, which may quite as probably arise from my weakness and the incompleteness of the documents as from the truth of your thesis and the force of your arguments?" [1]

Things have so far changed, indeed, that the miracles and prophecies which then constituted the great proof of the biblical revelation are now that part of revelation which most needs to be proved. The majority of Christians in our day believe in the miracles of Jesus because of his Gospel, not in the Gospel because of his miracles.

II

The Progress of Biblical Criticism

It was nothing less than a revolution when the biblical question was thus carried into the domain of history. By degrees men came to study those

[1] Lessing, "Sendschreiben: Ueber den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft," 1777.

books in the same way as other documents of antiquity, and to apply to them the same rules of criticism. Historical and literary problems presented themselves which they were morally compelled to resolve by the same methods. As soon as they gave themselves to this investigation with some degree of freedom they at once discovered in the sacred authors many things till then obscured by the golden halo with which they were surrounded; things which it became more and more difficult to square with the time-honoured theory of a supernatural and divine origin.

Comparing, for example, the two narratives of the early life of David, which we find in the First Book of Samuel, Bayle made the reflection that, if we were to find such a lack of sequence, such repetitions and contradictions, in Thucydides or Titus Livius, we should not hesitate to infer some grave alteration and disarrangement of the text. In vain did he prudently add that such suspicions should be carefully guarded against in the case of the Bible. Such rhetorical precautions seemed a cruel irony; they neither satisfied anyone nor gave a check to research. How shall criticism be refuted when it still more boldly affirms that, from a moral point of view, an action which is bad in the sight of eternal law is always bad, even when performed by a man who is endowed with divine inspiration?

The biblical writers were very far from claiming the prerogative of supernatural infallibility. In the preface to his Gospel Luke recommends himself to his readers like any ordinary historian, by the zeal and care with which he has investigated facts and marshalled them in his narrative in the best order and with the greatest exactitude. Why should we not bring other documents to our aid in judging of the relative success of his attempt? The Apostle Paul exhorts the Christians of Thessalonica and Corinth to judge for themselves of what he writes to them, to prove all things. If in certain places he appeals to a commandment of Christ, in others he declares that he is giving only his personal opinion, which he carefully distinguishes from the commands of the Lord. It is true that at times he speaks of revelations received

when in an ecstatic state, but he never gives it to be understood that God himself inspires his words, his reasonings, his citations, or the ideas that came spontaneously from the natural action of his mind or the memory of past experiences. In his style, his polemic, his way of laying down and defending his theses, the originality of his character and his entire personality are portrayed in vivid lines.

Very often, too, the sacred writers express themselves conjecturally or in an uncertain manner concerning things upon which the Holy Spirit might and could have given them entire certainty and precise information. With the progress of grammatical exegesis, and in the degree with which age-long prejudices were dissipated, it was impossible not to perceive important discrepancies; for example, between the Books of Kings and Chronicles, between Ezra and Nehemiah, between the four Gospels, or again, between the Epistle to the Romans and that of James concerning justification by faith. Finally, how can the theory of verbal inspiration be reconciled with the fact that the New Testament quotations from the Old very often do not correspond with the Hebrew text and sometimes contradict it? The prophet Micah, for example, had said: "But thou, Bethlehem, too small to be one of the branches of Judah," etc. But Matthew wrote: "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are in no wise least among the princes of Judah." Again, we see James, in his discourse reported in Acts xv. 16 ff., citing Amos ix. 11, according to the Septuagint version, but in complete contradiction of the Hebrew text. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, following the same Alexandrian version, makes the Psalmist say (xl. 7) "a body didst thou prepare for me," while in the Hebrew we read, "Thou hast digged (or opened) mine ears." All these observations, of small importance in the natural order of things, were mortal wounds to the doctrine of a supernatural verbal inspiration. The theory of divine accommodation to human errors and passions served for a while to excuse the deceptions and wholesale exterminations so often attributed to the command of God. But it was impossible long to pay men with

this counterfeit coin. As for certain biblical passages which seem to claim divine inspiration for the sacred books or for their authors, not to say that their sense is forced to distortion, can we not perceive the circle in which those are shut up who would try to prove the inspiration of the Bible by statements of the Bible itself?

Textual criticism was not less fatal to the dogma than exegesis. Searching out and collecting the manuscripts, collating the writings of the Fathers and the ancient versions, scholars accumulated various readings on the margins of the New Testament, demonstrating that, though the sacred text had been most piously preserved, it had by no means escaped the accidents that befall human things; that differences had accumulated in proportion as copies had been made; that it was, therefore, often necessary to be content with conjectures and probability; and that since the pure, original text could not be restored with any degree of certainty, the doctrine of verbal inspiration, *usque ad voces et consones*, no longer applied to anything, and had become useless.

At the same time the critical examination of the tradition as to the date, origin, and authorship of the books of the Bible showed its mistakes and untrustworthiness. It was felt that this entire subject needed to be revised. Hobbes, Spinoza, Richard Simon, Jean Leclerc, certainly did not discover the truth as to the composition of the Pentateuch, but they perceived that a diversity of elements had contributed to it, and clearly saw that instead of deriving from Moses, the earliest redaction of these books was far later. This being the case, the books were anonymous, and it was impossible to say to whom the supernatural prerogative of inspiration was to be attributed. The same was the case with Job, which, according to Leclerc, has no other truth than that which poetic verisimilitude demands in a tragedy. The prophets may have had visions and divine revelations. But their discourses were put into writing by themselves or their disciples after having been spoken, and we possess only fragments of them. Esther and Judith "are stories told at the writers' pleasure." Nowhere do we find any indication of verbal

inspiration, and it must be added that none of these writers, for the most part unknown, dreamed of claiming it. Piety, natural ability, and religious patriotism are a sufficient explanation of works in which things good and bad, shadow and light, are mingled together.

Criticism approached the books of the New Testament with more timidity. Nevertheless the freedom of judgment which Luther showed with regard to several of them was not entirely extinct. Here Richard Simon and certain Jesuit scholars opened a new path, which others soon followed.

Simon showed clearly that the titles put at the head of the Gospels and the Acts to make known their authors are a late addition, and therefore not exempt from investigation; he maintained that Matthew had originally been written in Hebrew, and that we possess only a Greek translation whose fidelity can be guaranteed by the Church alone. He very pertinently discussed the authenticity of the last twelve verses of Mark, disproved that of the passage in 1 John v. 7 about the three witnesses, denied that the Epistle of the Hebrews was from Paul's own pen. In short, he revived, though with his habitual prudence, all the uncertainties and differences of opinion which we find among the Church Fathers as to the list of canonical and non-canonical books, the homologoumena, the antilegomena, and the apocrypha. No doubt he strove to reconcile all these literary facts with the reality of inspiration, but he profoundly modified the idea of inspiration. He was especially fond of using it as a weapon against the Protestant dogma, and to show that, after all, the only basis for the divine authority of the Scriptures was the present authority of the Church. But in that case what does the latter rest upon? Catholics and Protestants, equally embarrassed before the witness of history, can escape its testimony only by shutting themselves up in vicious circles. Jean Leclerc developed the criticism of Richard Simon, and Semler, treading in their footsteps, went still further along the path they had opened. All questions were raised, and men began to get glimpses through the veil of dogmatics of an entirely

new historic reality, which our own age was at last to bring to the open light of day.

Under the influence of this criticism the dogmatic authority of the Canon of Holy Scripture also vanished away. The notion of the "Word of God" was changed. The two notions, Canon and divine Word, parted company, since they no longer coincided. The English Deists, Tindal especially, strained every nerve to show how little, or how ill, certain books of the Bible answer, either by their origin or their contents, to the idea which we cannot but form of the Word of God. How was it possible to maintain the authority of the Old Testament as equal to that of the New, approve equally the sanguinary intolerance of an Elijah and the gentleness of Jesus, consider as pleasing to God, or even commanded by him, the cruelties of Joshua and David, the falsehoods of Abraham, the schemes of Jacob, the thefts of which the Hebrews in their flight were guilty with regard to the Egyptians, etc.! Was it not evident that, though the Bible might contain the Word of God, it also contained other things in no wise especially divine; for example, documents of national history, the legislation of a long-outgrown religion of rites and statutes, and fragments of a literature which has no specifically religious character, like the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, the story of Judith, or the heroic songs of ancient Israel?

Finally, if we discard the authority of the Church, how can the present limits of the Canon be justified? From the point of view of history, can it be explained why the Son of Sirach is excluded and Ecclesiastes admitted? Who will precisely define the boundary which separates the canonical from the apocryphal books? Are not the Book of Daniel and the Second Epistle of Peter supposititious? If we build upon the witness of the Holy Spirit, can we maintain with sincerity that its testimony never falls short of and never overpasses the limits of the traditional collection in use in the Churches? [1]

Orthodox dogmatics might show itself indifferent to questions relating to the human origin of this or that biblical writing; it rested its

[1] Appendix LXXV.

faith upon God alone, the sole and original author of the Bible, and God could as well make use of an unknown writer, or one far removed from the facts he relates, as of an apostle or an eye-witness. But the Arminian theology, which claimed to found the *fides divina* upon the *fides humana*, that is to say, the divine authority of the Scriptures upon the historic veracity of the authors, could not enjoy the same serenity. If the history of Jesus was in question, it could not be a matter of indifference to it whether its authority was the work of a compiler of popular traditions or the authentic memoirs of the Apostle Matthew. The Fourth Gospel had not equal weight according as it was held to be a writing of John the son of Zebedee or of a theologian of the Alexandrian school. Thus it is easy to imagine what influence historic criticism and exegesis, with their disconcerting conclusions, were likely to have upon this theology.

III

Concessions and Compromises.—The Triumph of Rationalism

To say truth, since the sixteenth century there have always been men of moderate spirit who have made a stand against the logic of orthodoxy, and more or less accurately limited the divine revelation to matters which concern the salvation of the human race. The Arminian theory especially made concessions of this sort necessary, and, once entered upon this path, they found it becoming ever wider and wider.[1]

Hugo Grotius set the example; being one of the creators of grammatical exegesis, he was led by it to make distinctions between the canonical books and to note degrees in their inspiration. If inspiration was necessary to the prophets it does not follow that it was necessary to the historians. It sufficed that the authors of the historic books of the Bible should be of good faith and profound piety. Inspiration was therefore limited by Grotius to the prophets, the apostolic revelations, and the words of Jesus, which are the words of God himself. For all

[1] Episcopus, "Instit. Christ.," I. 4, 10; IV. 1, 4.

the rest the miraculous aid of the Spirit of God was needless; just judgment, scrupulous honesty, and the love of truth were sufficient.[1]

Following Grotius, Jean Leclerc was bolder still. Holding more strictly to history, he limited inspiration to those prophecies, commandments, and doctrines of the Bible which were in express terms attributed to God himself. Yet he claimed the right to examine, to correct, to doubt, all parts of the Bible.[2] It was a singular position. From this point of view there were inspiration and divine authority only where the miracle of a direct supernatural communication had occurred.

The permanent action of the Holy Spirit in the religious soul in general, and in the Christian soul in particular, was denied or ignored. Thenceforth there remained only the violent and abrupt antithesis of two reciprocally exclusive terms: the authority of revelation and the natural reason. Where one was established the other must submit and be silent.

The critical reason, however, continually gaining ground, the field of revelation, like that of miracle, necessarily diminished to the vanishing point. It was an easy matter to embarrass Leclerc by asking him what notion he had of the Word of God, if it was to be recognised wherever the letter of Scripture made God speak in person, and only there! Is there in the Bible no such rhetorical figure as the prosopopæia? For one can hardly set down to the account of God the sanguinary orders executed by Joshua and his successors. Leclerc admitted this, but this last frail barrier overturned, what was left to him except the inward criterion of conscience and the reason? The inconsequent theology of Arminianism was in reality only a transition to the rationalism of the following age.

This dualism of revelation and reason, that is, of two terms externally limiting and excluding one another as two heterogeneous sources

[1] Grotius, "Votum pro Pace Eccles.," p. 672.

[2] J. Leclerc, "Sentiment de quelques théologiens de Hollande," 1685, Letters XI., XII; "Défense des sentiments," Letters IX., X., Amsterdam, 1686.

of knowledge, is the fundamental characteristic of the supernaturalist conception of religion and the universe. Rationalism was already in the method; it could not but sooner or later appear in the doctrine.

The transformation thus taking place in the extremes of Protestantism, among the Socinians, the Arminians of Holland, and the English Deists, spread to the very centre, the most conservative circles. Theologians most firmly bound to the ancient dogma felt constrained to relax their bonds. This was especially the case with the Saumur school in France. Cameron distinguished between the Word of God, originally oral, and the same Word afterward committed to writing, and was more concerned with the divine inspiration of the doctrine than with that of the books which contained it.[1] His successors, Louis Cappel, Amyrault, Joshua de la Place, though they repeated the time-honoured formulas, were not limited by them. The first was not thereby deterred from his critical studies of the text of the Scripture and its history, nor the two others from speculating on the universality of grace and the imputability of Adam's sin.[2] The historical and critical spirit was developed and extended by the labours of Daillé and Blondel.[3]

Violent disputes agitated the churches and divided the synods. An ecclesiastical assembly held in Geneva, in 1675, drew up the formula of the *Consensus helveticarum ecclesiarum*, as a dam across the current. Never was more apparent the vanity of authoritative proceedings, their radical inconsistency with the principle of Protestantism. Half a century later the dam was carried away. The orthodox formula and the arbitrary sanctions which upheld it were officially abolished in Geneva

[1] The English theologian, Baxter, was of the same opinion. "It is necessary for salvation to believe the doctrine, not books. There is something human in the method and the expression, which are not so immediately divine as the doctrine," "The Saint's Everlasting Rest."

[2] "Syntagma thes. theolog." in Academia Salmuriense, 1664. It is apparent in this collection, however, that the doctrine of the inspiration of the books was more and more exaggerated till it reached verbal inspiration with Stephen Gaussen, "Thèses inaugurales de Verbo Dei," 1655.

[3] Appendix LXXVI.

itself, thanks to the efforts of the son of him who had contributed most to their establishment.[1]

From this time Arminian and Socinian rationalism crept in everywhere, into catechisms and sermons, and substituted its vague paraphrases for the older formulas of orthodoxy. Reason and revelation are originally equally revered powers. But the preponderating authority soon passes over to reason, for it is an admitted axiom that Scripture can contain nothing absurd or immoral, and if anything is found therein which appears so to be, it must be interpreted according to reason and the conscience.

In England and Germany the same movement went on with more logic and greater depth. Official teaching was compelled to make graver and graver concessions. The inspiration of the words was first abandoned, except as refuge was found in the morally disquieting theory of an accommodation of the Holy Spirit and his organs to the prejudices and errors of men of the time. In the ancient dogma of revelation there were three elements: the divine impulse (*impulsus ad scribendum*), the suggestion of the matter (*suggestio rerum*), and the inspiration of the words (*suggestio verborum*). Of these three elements, the first and third totally disappear, and the second, which alone appears important, is reduced to a simple direction of the intelligence and the memory, which preserved the sacred writers from serious errors.

The mystic witness of the Holy Spirit, bringing to the soul immediate confirmation of the truth of Scripture, is no longer admitted, nor even comprehended.[2] The apologists confined their demonstration to an appeal to history and the reason. But the testimony of history, more and more invalidated by criticism, inevitably ended in a general doubt, and the testimony of the reason, which soon became dominant, effected the transformation of revelation into moral philosophy, and of positive into natural religion.

In England more than elsewhere men cultivated the historical method

[1] Appendix LXXVII. [2] Appendix LXXVIII.

of demonstration by means of the prophecies and miracles.[1] It proved powerless to meet the philosophic criticism of Locke and Hume. If we take the Old Testament prophecies literally, it is clear that they were not fulfilled in the New, and the claims of Christianity are false. If we interpret them allegorically, it is still clear that they prove nothing, for there are no ancient texts that may not thus be adjusted to a later history.

The argument from miracles is even less weighty. Supposing them to be true, they prove nothing, for a healthy reason would simply believe itself to be in presence of phenomena whose causes it fails to grasp. How shall a positive demonstration be drawn from an avowal of ignorance? Is it not easier to make the conscience accept the moral teachings of Christ than to convince the reason of the reality of miracles and of his corporeal resurrection?[2]

If this moral doctrine constitutes the permanent and essential element of Christianity, natural religion logically takes the place of revealed religion.

In the same way the supernaturalism of the German theologians, the victim of its own inherent dualism, by degrees gave place to a more consistent and radical rationalism. The apologetic of men like Baumgarten, Crusius, Toellner, availed itself of the philosophy of Leibnitz and Wolff; it was introducing the enemy into the citadel. We do not appreciate the power of reason. Wherever it takes possession it commands, recognising no tribunal above itself. To prove by rational argument the truth of any doctrine whatever is to make it a rational truth. The reasonableness of an argument implies and necessarily establishes the reasonableness of the conclusion.

It availed nothing to assert that the Christian doctrine is above

[1] W. Whiston, "The Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies," 1708; N. Lardner, "The Credibility of the Gospel History," 1727-57; Th. Chalmers, "The Evidence and Authority of the Christian Revelation," 1834.

[2] D. Hume, "Essay on Miracles."

reason but not opposed to it, for of two things one is true: either this superior doctrine has no relations with the reason, and the reason in that case cannot recognise it, but it must be accepted blindly; or else the reason accepts it because of motives of which she can understand the value, and the doctrine necessarily enters the domain of rational verities. It was often said that revelation is to the reason what the telescope is to the eye. But the eye sees what is in the speculum, and in the last analysis reason judges of it. Reduced to the simple function of a temporary auxiliary, either to shorten the route or to hasten the progress of humanity, revelation would not only lose its former sovereignty, but it would soon disappear, since the progress of reason would render it progressively less needful. Religion shut up within the limits of the reason—this is the point where the critical movement, begun with Grotius and Leclerc, ends in the philosophy of Kant and the theology of Wegscheider.[1] The dogma of plenary inspiration drags with it into its final ruin the notion of revelation itself.

IV

Latent Germs and New Methods

Rationalism made an end of scholasticism, without essentially differing from it. It was and it affected in the nineteenth century that which nominalism was and did in the fifteenth. It is the expression of a like dialectic movement; it is scholasticism turning again back upon itself, and pulling down its own erections by means of the very method by which it had built them up.

Reimarus, Voltaire, or Tindal had no other idea of religion than Quenstedt or Calov. To all men of that age the Christian religion was a supernatural science, a system of doctrines which some held to be true and others false. As the former explained it by the hypothesis of a

[1] I. Kant, "Die Religion innerhalb d. Grenzen der blossen Vernunft," 1793; Wegscheider, "Inst. Theol.," 2d ed., 1817.

divine intervention the latter always found it possible to attribute it to clerical trickery, and this they did not fail to do.

With the triumph of English Deism the religious atmosphere seemed to clear; in reality, it simply grew colder. Men sought a foothold in the middle ground of common sense in philosophy, and in middle-class integrity in morals. Practical religion, bereft of warmth and ideal, was reduced to the art of living well, and turning to the best advantage the good things of the earth. It was all a matter of reason and reflection. Inspiration was dead, the hidden springs of the spiritual life seemed to be dried up. Natural religion, which men tried to build up on the ruins of all earlier beliefs, was as lacking in vitality as in poetry. It was insufficient as a philosophical hypothesis; as an educating and governing power it appeared inefficacious and consequently useless. As to the traditional religion, it seemed to live on merely by force of habit. Dogmas and ceremonies persisted, but only as empty forms. The tree was still deeply rooted in the ground, but shaken by the storms of winter it had lost its flowers and fruit; only the bare trunk with its skeleton of dead and leafless branches stood up against the low-hanging sky.

Historical criticism and exegesis had been the potent auxiliaries of rationalistic religion, and had indeed assured its victory. But in reality they represented an independent power, which could no better accommodate itself to the tyranny of rationalistic dogmas than to those of orthodoxy. The history of exegesis during the rationalistic period is only too clear. Rationalism, essentially abstract and metaphysical, was no more alive to history than to religious inspiration; it had no insight into the diversities of times, races, and capacities. To it primitive humanity was an unknown region; it has caught no glimpse of the spontaneous burgeoning of the mysterious and profound child-soul of humanity, with its myths and legends, its poetry and its dreams, another language than the prose of a cold rationalism. Why should we wonder, then, that it was unable to appreciate the biblical documents, and deemed that, having settled the question of the supernatural and divine authority of

the sacred volume, the whole matter was settled and done with? But the time for a new revelation was at hand, which would restore to the modern spirit that religious faculty which it seemed to have lost, and to the science of history that freedom which it needed in order to comprehend and revive the spiritual conditions of the earlier time.

The seeds of this new harvest had long been germinating, unperceived in the historic soil of the Reformation. Under the most arid desert sands there is always living water, which, gushing forth here and there, produces a vegetation which, however far from luxuriant, is yet always fresh and young, and attests the immortal power of life. Such were the movements at this time produced under the influence of the disciples of Spener, Wesley, and the Moravian Brethren. These pietists did not discuss the external authority of Scripture; they did better; they fed upon the spiritual food which it offers to the soul, and if they were incapable of solving questions of origin and exegesis, or of proving the formal authority of the biblical collection, they learned all the more to know its inward worth by moral experience. Thus it became a matter of demonstration that theology was not religion, nor correct dogma faith. It appeared clearly that Christianity was something other than the abstract thesis of the supernatural authority of a book, that it had in itself that which justified it immediately to the soul; and assurance of faith was shown to be something other than historical research or philosophical discussion. It was found that Calvin was right when he said that it was the property of Christian assurance to have a higher sanction than human reason: the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. From the purely formal principle of the Reformation, that is, the external authority of the Bible, on which for more than a century everything had been based, men turned with more or less intuition and logic to the essential principle, to the religious and moral substance, the enfranchising doctrine of justification by faith; that is, to the immediate apprehension by the repentant and believing soul of the divine gift, of the Father's grace in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such is the important

revolution which, effected without observation in the middle of the eighteenth century, brought about the striking religious revivals of the nineteenth. Premonitory signs were multiplied, and prophetic voices, ever clearer and more numerous, proclaimed the new era.

First was heard the uncertain, passionate, eloquent voice of Jean Jacques Rousseau. To appreciate the religious originality of Rousseau we must compare him with Voltaire. Both indeed are Deists and rationalists, but the first has something which the other lacks—religious emotion, the electric spark of life. Emotion, in fact, is the very life of religion, because it alone can show that the human soul has recognised the divine guest which it carries in itself, and has given itself to it. With Rousseau the soul looks from without inward, and beneath the barren activity of the discursive reason rediscovers the deeps springs of sentiment and inspiration, all the life of the heart, with its intuitions, its needs, and its secret reasonings which the reason knows not of.

It is the upspringing of this intense subjective life which makes the originality and power of Rousseau's eloquence. Just as he discovered the true soul under the conventions and artifices of civilised life, the feeling for nature under praises of an ornamental country seat, the passion of love under gallantry, so he discovered inward religion under the practices and traditions of the Church, the gospel of Christ within the scaffoldings of theology. Historical demonstrations of the truth of a religion on which depend the eternal destiny of individuals tended rather to awake than to dispel his doubts. A series of historic testimonies, all fallible, heaped up to establish a divine infallibility, seemed to him absurd. "How many men," he cried, "between God and me!" Yet, when he opened the gospel and gave himself up to reading it, he felt, with deep emotion, its sovereign attraction. "The majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me; the simplicity of the Gospels speaks to my heart." Thus religious thought, with still uncertain steps, made its way from the surface to the heart, from the study of the tree to the taste of the fruit, instinctively trying to substitute the inward experience of

faith, which is the essential principal of the Reformation, for the purely formal principle of the divine authority of the book.[1]

In Germany the voice of Lessing arose more clear and penetrating. His mind, like a pure diamond which not only cuts, but sparkles, reflected in its fires all aspects of the time-consciousness, while with its trenchant edge it laid bare the secret vice of fallacious apologetics. He was at once a marvellous dialectician and a prophet, a rationalist and a mystic. In the very heat of battle he sowed the seeds of a new harvest. His criticism breathed through authoritative theology and conventional literature like healthy spring breezes. Through the irony of his paradoxes and apologues flowed a generous sap. "If God," he boldly said, "were to offer me in one hand the immutable truth and in the other the search for truth, I should say in all humility, 'Lord, keep the absolute truth; it is not suited to me. Leave to me only the power and the desire to seek for it, though I never find it wholly and definitively.'" This is not scepticism, it is faith; it is the lively sense that truth is not a sum of clearly defined knowledge, but loyal and upright activity of thought and the normal growth of the mind itself. The truth is formed in us because we have first of all to form ourselves in it. The first condition of having the truth is to be in the truth.

It is a still more fruitful thought that the truth has no need to make itself known by exterior sanctions, such as prodigies and miracles. The intrinsic qualities of evidence and persuasive influence are its true marks, given it by God to open its way to all upright hearts. The Christian religion has no need of the frail supports with which theology seeks to prop it; it has always been, and still is, proved by its own virtue. "If the paralytic feels the beneficent shock of the electric spark, and so regains power to walk, what matters it to him whether Nollet or Franklin, or indeed neither of them, was right in his theory of electricity?"

It is not because the Christian religion is in the Bible that it is true; it is because it is in itself true that, when you find it in the Bible, you

[1] Rousseau, "Emile," Book IV., "Letters from the Mountain."

say that the Bible teaches the truth. The Christian religion does not rest upon the Bible; we can discuss the origin and value of the one without attacking the truth of the other. The Christian religion existed before a single book of the Bible was written and canonised; it would still exist even if the early Christian books had disappeared. To put the Bible in its true place is not to depreciate it. Without the slightest doubt it contains revelation; it is not revelation. There are in it many things entirely foreign to religion. How shall we help making the distinctions that common sense indicates? Do they of Hamburg neglect to distinguish net weight from gross weight, and to separate the merchandise from its packing?

"The letter," says Lessing emphatically, "is not the Spirit. The Spirit acts through the letter, but it is not bound to it. It blows where it will, and it blows everywhere. Oh, Luther, thou hast delivered us from the yoke of tradition! who shall deliver us from the yoke of thy letter?"[1] Lessing is a prophet of the religion of the Spirit.

This is not to say that there are not many inconsistent elements in his writings. He is of his time, though he overpasses his time. To feel his vivid originality we must compare him with Reimarus, whose penetrating editor he was. Reimarus is a man of the past; he reasons with the premisses of scholasticism; he has the same conception of revelation and religious inspiration as Goetze and the other orthodox pastors whom he exasperates. When they say, "Miracle, communication from heaven," he cries, "Imposture and priestly ambition." One explanation is as good as the other, and both are of precisely the same order. In both cases the natural, living fabric of history is arbitrarily rent, either by the divine will or by the human will. Rationalists and supernaturalists of this kind give an equal shock to Lessing's historic and his religious sense. In his own way he transforms the idea of revelation; it is not

[1] Lessing, "Theol. Schriften.," 2te Abtheil, I. pp. 261, 262. See, especially, the little tracts; Sendschreiben: Ueber den Beweis des Geistes u. der Kraft; Eine Parabel; Axiomata, Les répliques et dupliqes à Goetze; Religion Christi und Christliche Religion.

a *quantum* of doctrines formulated once for all with absolute rigour: it is something living, or rather, something inherent in the spiritual life itself, the constant action of the Spirit of God in the human conscience to awaken and purify it, to lift it step by step to the full light of truth, justice, and fraternal love. No historic religion is absolutely true, but also none is entirely false. They all enter the divine plan of history, like successive moments, with a relative legitimacy. Revelation is a pedagogic; it is God carrying on the progressive education of humanity.

If Christianity is the perfect religion, it is just because in it the Spirit of God appears absolutely independent of the letter and of rites. In his most excellent historical creations he always remains ideal and transcendent: he asserts himself in sovereign freedom. By degrees, and not in a book, but in souls, not with ink, but in practical truths and in sentiments of love, he indites his supreme revelation, "The Eternal Gospel."[1]

All is not clear in Lessing's thought. His Christianity consists of certain eternal verities entirely disconnected with history. History is not only incapable of establishing them; it continually contradicts them. There is no bridge by which to pass from the domain of historic facts, which are accidental, to the domain of the eternal reason. There is an absolute antithesis between the immutable and the contingent, between God and the world. Therefore, the very idea of a divine education of men by history becomes impossible. This is the radical vice in Lessing's system; by this as yet unresolved dualism he belongs to the time of Wolff and of natural religion. In order that there should be an education in history there must be a progressive revelation of the divine reason in history itself, the metaphysical truth must be immanent in human development, the divine Word must be made flesh, that time and eternity, history and metaphysics, may be reconciled. Thus the Christian reli-

[1] Lessing, "Abhandlung über die Erziehung des menschl. Geschlechts." On the character of Lessing's Christianity see F. Lichtenberger, "Hist. des idées rel. en Allemagne," I. p. 67; J. A. Dorner, "History of Protestant Theology."

gion will finally regain its value and dignity as a historic force. Lessing announced the impending revolution without feeling in himself the strength to inaugurate it. He invoked the advent of a stronger thinker than he. He was only a precursor, and he knew it. The Messiah of the new era was Schleiermacher.[1] This great man is at the turning point of the age. With him Luther's reform returns to its creative principle,—justification by the faith of the heart,—and Protestantism enters upon a new phase.

Schleiermacher's antecedents predestinated him to his work. From the Moravian Brethren who brought him up he received the endowment of a warm, intense piety, yet sufficiently free on the dogmatic side. His thought had been formed in the dialectical school of Plato and Spinoza. Thence the two constituent elements of his theology: the religion of the heart considered as an irreducible fact of experience anterior to any religious theory, and an intellectual strength of extraordinary rigour and force. It would have been morally impossible for him to subordinate one element to the other. "Reason and sentiment," he wrote to Jacobi, "live in me apart, but contiguous. It is a sort of galvanic pile, the spark of which creates the activity of my mind." To reconcile sentiment and reason, to find the scientific theory of his religious faith, was his life task, the endeavour of his thought. If there are some discrepancies in his attempted synthesis, if the philosopher and the Christian within him are not always in accord, it is doubtless because the solution of the problem can never be more than approximate, and still remains not the work of one man, but the historic task of humanity.

The common error, both of the rationalists and the supernaturalists, who were waging a venerable but sterile warfare in the arena of theology, was to consider faith as a sum of traditional doctrine, which one party deduced from reason and the other believed to have fallen from heaven. By both methods equally religion was reduced to an intellectual operation. Schleiermacher took from under the combatants the very ground on which they were fighting. Faith, he said, is not a doctrine nor a

[1] Appendix LXXIX.

system of doctrines, it is neither a dogma nor a precept received from an exterior authority, it is vital piety, the inward tendency of the religious sentiment itself; it is the loving and joyful recognition of the relations of the soul with God. Being an independent, original, psychologic act, faith then becomes an object of observation and a fact of experience, not of individual experience alone, but of collective experience, a historic fact, permanent in the very life of the Christian Church, and making itself known as such to philosophic reflection, whose task it is to understand it and labour to make it intelligible. This labour is the part of theology. Faith is not the effect, it is the cause of the dogma. To confound the two is as unreasonable as to confound the phenomena of nature, which physics is investigating, with the successive explications which physicists have given them.[1]

By such teaching, the basis of the old dogmatic was displaced and the very nature of theology transformed. There could then be an experimental science of religion, a positive science which had for its task to observe, classify, and rigorously concentrate the religious phenomena, ranking not below the other sciences, but side by side with those in the encyclopædia of human knowledge. Thus to conquer independence for religion, and for the science of religion its uncontested legitimacy, is the most eminent service which Schleiermacher rendered at once to religious faith and to philosophy.

With him the Protestant conscience finally passed the strait which separates the theology of authority from the theology of experience. Religious truth could no longer be given by an oracle; henceforth it must spring out of Christian experience itself, and never cease to reproduce itself in pious souls, under the permanent influence of the Spirit of Christ. Holy Scripture could no longer be the foundation of faith; it became an auxiliary, a means of grace. In the doctrinal system built up by the dialectic of Schleiermacher, the Bible no longer takes its place in the foundation, but on the summit of the edifice. No doubt it con-

[1] F. Schleiermacher, "Der christl. Glaube," Einleit., sect. 15-31.

tinues to be a production of the Holy Spirit, but of the Holy Spirit considered as a collective spirit, the historic soul of the Church, the immanent divine principle of her earthly life and activity. The witness of the Spirit to Christ in the New Testament is not essentially different from its witness to him in the works of the centuries following. There is not at any moment an exterior and visible passage from the supernatural to the natural; the divine and the human are constantly mingled in all writings which are truly Christian. The superiority of those of the apostles and their immediate successors lies in being primitive, and by so much the more original, and in having been composed under the still living influence of the person of Christ, which was not the case with any who came later. The water of the stream is always purer near the spring than in its later current. Thence come the peculiar dignity and historic authority of the New Testament books. They remain the norm of Christian tradition because they are its oldest and most authentic documents. As for the Old Testament, the Bible of Judaism, it is not of especial interest to Christians, since it brings them only memories of an earlier religion, superseded and abolished by the new religion.

To sum up, the authority of Holy Scripture cannot be the object of faith, nor can it even be the basis of faith in Christ; on the contrary, it is faith in Christ which makes the Christian and which alone makes it possible for him to recognise the peculiar authority of Scripture. Formerly men went from the Bible to Christ; henceforth men will go from Christ to the Bible. Faith in Christ, a life in communion with Christ, the transformation of our evil self by his word and spirit, are effects in the exclusively moral order, and immediately justified to each conscience in which they have taken place. The Bible, the canon, and the books which constitute it, are historic and literary phenomena which it is neither legitimate nor possible to withdraw from the researches and authority of criticism, exegesis, and history.[1]

Thus in Protestantism was begun the evolution of the religion of

[1] "Sendschreiben an D. Luecke," II., "Studien u. Kritiken," 1829, p. 496ff.

the letter toward the religion of the spirit. The work of Luther was prolonged without inconsistency; it was freed from the shreds of Catholicism which for more than two centuries had painfully encumbered it, and enabled to concentrate itself and find life in its own peculiar principle of personal faith and immediate experience of truth. Yet was the struggle not ended. The past was again to make itself felt in a singularly violent attack. Battles like these must be won more than once before victory is assured. Yet the issue could be no longer doubtful. Schleiermacher had opened a door to the future which no one would thenceforth have power to shut.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I

Revival and Reaction

Religious forms and institutions consecrated by an age-long tradition may appear outworn and dead; but inevitably every awakening of the conscience turns to their profit and gives them a new lease of life. They are like those hardy vegetations which the summer sun dries up, to be revived and grow green again with the first dews of the autumn sky.

The deepest springs of the soul's life had been reopened by the commotion of those great catastrophes, the Revolution and the Empire.[1] The optimistic rationalism and the facile life which had characterised the preceding age had vanished. Everything had seemed to crumble away together in the fearful storms which brought home to every man

[1] In the French-speaking countries this movement has received the name of the Revival.

the insufficiency of his own powers and his own light, and had awakened within him the tragic sense of the mystery of things and of his own destiny. Passing through a succession of events whose rapidity dizzied him, he gained in this flight of things a clearer vision of the eternal and the infinite, and felt a vague desire to shelter himself in them. Here, as always, his imagination outran his intelligence. Regret for the loss of his youthful faith first awakened a longing for it, and soon gave him an impression of having found it again.

In default of convictions he had emotions; he was touched with the poetry of the ancient faith; he experienced again the mystic influence of cathedrals and religious rites. This revival was not very profound, but it was very vivid. Romanticism was its expression and its flower. All branches of art found their youth again. Religious enthusiasm performs miracles of this sort: as soon as it begins to breathe in a man all the faculties of the soul begin to bloom.[1]

The religious revival was complicated with a political reaction. The Revolution had cast down throne and altar; both must be raised up. People began to blush for things of which the preceding century had been proud. That century had combated dogmas in the name of philosophy and reason; people set themselves to restore the dogmas and to make reason bend to faith. They had carried liberty to the wildest license; with equal passion they threw themselves into the arms of authority, and made it an absolute theory, as they had made an absolute theory of liberty. Joseph de Maistre, de Bonald, Lamennais, each in his own way and by arguments of his own magnified the theocratic order; they set forth its principles and unfolded its effects with a sincerity of logic which made its vices and perils only the more apparent to the common judgment.

It is interesting to find everywhere analogous processes and identical reasonings in the most dissimilar countries and the most antagonistic Churches—all being moved by the same needs and the same tendency of things.

[1] Appendix LXXX.

In Protestant theology the resurrection of the dogma of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures responds to the theory of papal infallibility in Catholicism. Everywhere men were raising up idols by way of escape from anarchy and doubt. The blind desire to find somewhere a visible, undebatable authority, silenced all objections and overcame all scruples. The all-powerful *a priori* effected precisely this. The question was not whether the Bible and the Pope were really infallible; the point was to show that they must be so. The Protestant Gaussen reasons precisely like the Catholic Maistre. They do not agree as to the organ of divine infallibility, but each will have his own; each chooses it according to his tradition and preferences, but he justifies it by the same argument.

Contemporaneously with the reawakening of the religious sentiment two other forces had sprung into a new and incomparable life, the science of history and natural science. At first, far from embarrassing or opposing religion, they appeared to render it service. Did not Newton's heavens declare the glory of God as strikingly as David's? Were not piety and the historic imagination equally stimulated by the "Martyrs" of Chateaubriand and the novels of Walter Scott? But the inconsistency blazed forth as soon as the religious sentiment sought to command respect and influence by reviving the dogmas and formulas of the Middle Ages. The *cosmos* of the modern world had become too large to be shut up in the limits of ancient thought.

The generation which came upon the stage with the new century was like a man who, having reached maturity, expects nothing more of life, sighs for the dreams of childhood while knowing himself powerless to go back to them. Thus the men of the time, swaying between the desire to believe and the impossibility of believing what tradition offered them as religious truth, fell into a melancholy quite as much compounded of piety as of scepticism. Doubt often appeared to be more religious than faith. We remember Schiller's saying: "Why hast thou no religion—for religion's sake." It was as necessary to renew ideas and in-

stitutions as sentiments. But both intellectual and moral vigour were wanting for such an enterprise. A few choice spirits proclaimed the necessity of a reformation, but these infrequent prophets were either misunderstood or unheeded.

In general, men were content with attempts at conciliation which veiled the difficulty, but did not cure it. They sewed patches of new cloth upon the old garment, but the resulting rents were so much the worse. It is enough to recall the memorable history of Lamennais and his journal *l'Avenir*. The painful crisis of which Jouffroy gives the story in a celebrated essay was not less significant.[1] Nearly all the great souls of that age had their Gethsemane night.

This state of mind was at that time universal. But nowhere is it more pathetically revealed than in England. And this is entirely explicable; as the English have at once profound religious needs and a very vivid sense of reality, it was unavoidable that they should suffer more than others in the inevitable conflict which in this revival period was waged between their religious tradition and their general culture.[2]

In Germany biblical science and the Kantian philosophy were in the forefront of the struggle. The new theology which Schleiermacher, de Wette, and others endeavoured to deduce from it offered no strong point of resistance against men of the Church and the government, who exercised authority and carried on the work of propaganda. The people were all unaware of the new conceptions, elaborated in university halls. As in England Puseyism upheld the authority of Catholic tradition and the efficacy of the sacraments as a refuge for battle-tossed souls, so in Germany the new Lutheran orthodoxy, supported by pietism, fell back upon the sixteenth-century Confessions of Faith and the infallible authority of the letter of Scripture. Neither English Puseyites nor German neo-Lutherans perceived the hazard to the Church and the menace to the Protestant principle in methods which in fact were the

[1] "Comment les dogmes finnissent.," "Mélanges philosophiques," 1833.
[2] See, for example, Francis Newman's "Phases of Faith," 1849.

most violent of anachronisms. History sometimes resembles, but never repeats itself. The old wine-skins, in which they sought to secure the wine of the new vintage, must inevitably soon burst and the wine flow forth in all directions.[1]

In French-speaking countries the most brilliant and logical theorist of the faith of authority and the literal inspiration of the Bible was Louis Gaussen, a pastor and professor at Geneva during the first half of the century. His name has become the ultimate symbol of a doctrine which his ability as a writer succeeded in galvanising into a brief life.

By a logic of extraordinary simplicity he presented it in a form equally simple. The Canon of Holy Scripture, that is, the collections of writings to-day included within the covers of a Protestant Bible, was made by God himself and given to the Church in the beginning with the express prohibition of ever adding anything to it or taking anything away from it. It was a great historic miracle concerning which history is indeed silent, but which we must accept because otherwise there is no certitude upon which faith can rest. The Bible thus constituted claims to be itself the pure word of God. It must therefore be accepted as such in all its parts and even in its letter. It is of small consequence what were the names of the men who in divers times and by divers manners held the pen which wrote these books. They were only the instruments of the Holy Spirit, who is the sole author and as much responsible for the style of these writings as for their thought. Neither reason nor conscience has a word to say before this divine text. When God speaks man has but to be adoringly and submissively silent. Gaussen was both preacher and poet; but he was by no means a severe thinker. Otherwise he could not have failed to see, first, that his initial assertion, the Bible in all its parts claims to be the word and the work of God, was false, and, in the second place, that supposing it to be historically true, the reasoning with which he supports it is simply a vicious circle.[2]

[1] Appendix LXXXI.

[2] L. Gaussen, "Théopneustie, ou inspiration plenière des S. Ecritures," 2d ed., 1842; "Le Canon des S. Escrit.," 2 vols., 1860.

Periods of reaction are thus far useful, that in pushing outworn ideas to the extreme they make manifest their error and thus hasten their extinction. It is a sort of demonstration by the absurd. Gaussen had both disciples and rivals before formulating his theory. After that event he was left isolated in his own field. Thinkers hastened to disown statements which they deemed compromising, and a deduction whose only fault was its logic. They protested energetically against the rationalistic distinction between the Bible and the Word of God, without, however, saying how it was possible or permissible to identify the two. They were driven to more and more serious concessions as to the inspiration of the Book, while yet clinging to the dogma of its infallibility. They seemed not to perceive that a tribunal ceases to be infallible the very moment men feel themselves at liberty to discuss its decrees, to adopt some of them and disregard others.

A situation so full of ambiguities and inconsistencies could not last long. A revolution was imminent. Two superior minds prepared its way by their endeavours to avert it. The first was Samuel Vincent, who defined modern Protestantism in the words: "Free investigation is its form; the gospel of Jesus Christ is its substance." This was a sufficiently clear statement that Protestantism claims no extrinsic authority before which reason and conscience must bow; that the gospel is sufficient to itself, and claims acceptance by intrinsic evidence of its worth.[1]

At the same period Alexandre Vinet, who, in his discourse with de Wette at Basel had perceived how frail was the foundation of external authority upon which dogmatics was resting the truth of the Christian religion, bent all his powers to the task of giving it a more secure basis. He found it in the experience of the Christian soul itself, in the profound harmony between the need of sinful man and the offer made by God in the person and work of Jesus Christ.[2] In two respects this discovery opened

[1] Samuel Vincent, "Vues sur le protestantisme," 1829, republished by Prévost-Paradol in 1860, under the title: "Du protestantisme en France."

[2] A. Vinet, "Etudes et nouvelles evangéliques. *Vide* art. "Vinet," in the "Encycl. des sc. relig.," Vol. XII.

a way out of the subjective principle of Protestant piety, checked and repressed for two centuries by the dogma of external authority. It was a return to the liberating principle of the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, giving to that its true significance and bearing; it was the shifting of religious authority from without to within, and the preparation, on the very principle of the Reformation, for a reformation not less radical than that of the sixteenth century.

With the incomparable advance made by criticism and biblical exegesis during this first half of the century, a death struggle between the ancient dogmas and their conclusions became inevitable. The historic method was fast becoming an exact science, and even as it was practised, for example, by Edouard Reuss at Strasburg, a religion.[1] Men could no more be conscientiously untrue to it than to a command of God. For its one purpose was to discover the actual character and true meaning of these books under the abstract and erroneous presentation of the old dogmatic. Let now a clear and logical mind appear, inheriting the fervent piety and rigid dogma of the Revival, and trained in a free university to the conscientious practice of the historic method; the inconsistency of the two will be intolerable to his own conscience, and in the loyal endeavour to free himself from it he will awake the conscience of the whole Church with a great shock. Such a man was Edmond Scherer.

II

The Final Crisis

The struggle which from 1848 to 1860 was going on in Scherer's soul awoke so wide an echo and exerted so great an influence because it gave form and manifestation to an idea which many minds had been secretly brooding. In the first outburst of his thought there was nothing new

[1] Ed. Reuss, "Hist. de la Théol. chrét. au siècle apostolique," 1852; "Histoire du Canon des S. Ecritures," 1862; "La Bible," 1874-80.

except the vigorous reasoning and language with which he brought into relief the antagonisms latent in the consciousness of the time. Such indignation or surprise as arose was due to the fact that one religious society more than another was disturbed that its inward sore should be unveiled, and its true picture held up before it in living outlines. Scherer's criticisms, the confessions of a soul pious even to ecstasy and sincere even to impossibility of compromise, constrained every man to look within himself, and each found there more or less of the same conflict between a superannuated theology and a new historical culture. Numerous voices at once uprose in reply to the voice which rang abroad as that of a liberator; they revealed the same condition of inward suffering, and the same resolve to be free. Thus was born the spontaneous movement that produced the *Revue de théologie et de philosophie chrétienne* of Strasburg, which for twenty years exerted so decisive an influence upon religious thought in France.[1]

A profound moral conversion and a fervent piety which hardly stopped short of visions had led Edmond Scherer in early life to accept the Revival dogma of the total inspiration and infallible authority of the Scriptures. There was hardly a shade of difference between his thought on this point and the theory of Gaussen, his colleague of Geneva. Called by his lectures on "Biblical Criticism and Exegesis" to justify this ancient dogma, he saw it to be denied by so many patent facts, so many actual observations, that he could not continue to uphold it, and as his frankness of speech was equalled only by the disinterestedness of his thought, he had no hesitation in at once confessing the change through which he had passed, and presenting his resignation as Professor in the Oratoire Theological School of Geneva. It was the year 1849, and he was then thirty-four years old.[2]

Historically, Scherer's criticism makes no new discovery and adds

[1] *Vide* in vol. i. of the *Revue,* pp. 1, 9, the articles by T. Colani, "Avant-Propos," and Edouard de Pressensé, "Le Progrès de la doctrine chrétienne et ses conditions," July, 1850.

[2] Appendix LXXXII.

nothing to the observations accumulated in the same line by Richard Simon, Jean Leclerc, Lessing, Semler, and the German theologians of the nineteenth century. Whence, then, came the new importance taken on by the same facts under his pen? Doubtless it was due to circumstances, to the state of mind created by the Revival, to the theological illusion revived by the new faith, but it owed much to the dogmatic character which Scherer's criticism at once assumed. It tended less to rectify inexact historic knowledge than to displace the very basis of the Christian religion. It was the last attack upon the faith of authority; Scherer was sapping the foundations of the entire traditional edifice of the past, and under its ruins, like Samson overthrowing the pillars of the idol temple of the Philistines, he was doomed to be buried.

Men have never ceased to point an awful warning from this result. Those who cultivate the theology of fear have found in it the condemnation of criticism itself. But criticism is no more an instrument of destruction than a means of salvation. Its sole purpose is truth. To proscribe it is deliberately to doom one's self to falsehood. The relatively negative attitude taken by Scherer with regard to traditional belief is as much the responsibility of those who defended it as of himself.

The conquest of truth, like every other conquest, implies arduous fighting, and every battle has its victims, whom we ought to be wise enough to honour when they have devoted themselves absolutely to a just cause. Is anything in this world more holy than the love of truth? Far from being mutually hostile, the love of truth and the love of God are identified in souls heroically sincere, who neither would nor could enjoy communion with God at the price of known delusions fostered by selfish calculation. Until the end Scherer loved the truth more than anything in the world; to it he sacrificed his rest and consecrated the labour of his life. Yet we do not say that he was always without fault or weakness—he himself made no such boast—but we do say that he

was more faithful to his early dreams, to his earthly mission, and to the Spirit of Christ, than many Christians who had no better reply to his arguments than excommunication.

The struggle would have been less acute and the reaction less violent had the dogma been less rigid. The more the Revival had concentrated the Christian religion in the dogma of the Scriptures, the more Christian truth appeared to be endangered when the dogma fell to pieces. Nothing is easier to understand. An external authority which insists upon being believed on its own assertion and merits must appear to be impeccable. The first proved error robs it of its privilege of infallibility, and imposes upon the aroused reason the duty of submitting all its assertions to a loyal scrutiny. The more these assertions are considered necessary to the moral life and the soul's salvation, the more imperative becomes the obligation to verify them one by one. The method of observation and experience thus necessarily takes the place of the method of authority. It is no longer a matter of correcting the excesses of some particular dogma. A radical revolution is taking place.

With such a change in method we have not only a change in the character of results, but the quality of faith becomes different. To believe that a doctrine is true because it is in the Bible is something entirely different from saying that it is in the Bible because it is true. In the former case the external supernatural authority of the Bible alone decides as to truth: in the latter the Christian reason and conscience are the supreme tribunal. In the first case the Christian vacates his independence of thought; he judges of religious things according to the judgment of others; in the second, he judges of them for himself. In one case he is under tutelage to a letter which for him is law; in the second he is in the royal liberty of a child of God, guided and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

Under the rule of exterior authority there must always be an intermediary between man and the truth, and this is a remnant of Catholicism; under the rule of the Spirit there is immediate contact between the

consciousness and truth, and we return to the first and true principle of the Reformation.

Scherer's glory and merit was to have understood from the first the bearing of the impending crisis, and to have interpreted it as a new struggle between the Catholic and the Protestant principles. It is impossible to be too grateful to him for having revivified the latter in the Reformed Churches by showing with inexorable logic that Protestantism would become a stunted, fickle, and superstitious Catholicism, that it would lose its inward salt and its whole reason for being, if it did not itself complete the work of transferring the authority of religion from without to within, if it did not effect its own inward transformation by rising from a religion of authority to the religion of the Spirit.

Nothing is better adapted to bring out, even at this late day, the power of Scherer's criticism, than a reading of the replies which it elicited.[1] The confusion was universal. The defenders of the old system mutually refuted, and so to speak, cancelled one another by the diverse inconsistencies of their arguments. Thus Jalaguier, the wisest among them, disavowed the indefensible exaggerations of the thoroughgoing theopneustics; he fell back, however, upon the weak arguments of the Arminians and Socinians, and endeavoured to base the divine authority of the New Testament upon the reality of the miracles, and their reality upon the authenticity of the books and the historical good faith of their authors. He did not perceive the vagueness of this notion of authenticity when applied to a literature which is in great part anonymous or pseudonymous, how contrary it is to the Christian spirit to judge the doctrine by the miracles, instead of judging the miracles by the doctrine. Nor did he perceive how impossible it is for a historical demonstration of this sort, so distant from the facts and in such obscurity regarding them, never reaching anything but a greater or less probability, to satisfy the requirements of a truly religious faith which yet can find rest only in absolute certainty. M. de Gasparin entered the arena in his turn, and loftily proclaiming the insufficiency of a

[1] Appendix LXXXIII.

method which suspends the truth of the Christian religion upon the uncertainties of a historic and human demonstration, considered only one argument valid: Jesus Christ had cited the books of the Old Testament as infallible; therefore the Old and the New Testament must be equally so.

In the first place it is not true that he cited all the Old Testament books and thus sanctioned them all; it is especially not true that he cited them as infallible, since he had in himself a higher revelation, which not only made him independent of the ancient letter, but gave him the right to controvert and reform it. He brought out from it some luminous truths, no doubt, but by the very fact of this new light he cast into the shadow of the past the law of Moses. The example of Christ proves the contrary of what these writers sought to deduce from it.

A third party appeared, who, unable to close their eyes to evidence, granted the facts actually proved by exegesis and criticism, but arbitrarily limited their significance. Unable to maintain the absolute character of the infallibility of the Bible, without which infallibility does not exist, and unwilling to break with the dogma of authority, these theologians maintained a sort of indefinite and limited infallibility, a fallible infallibility which it is simply impossible to define. It is the sovereignty of Scripture maintained without liability for obligations. To appreciate the singular character of this position, the position of what has been called "modern orthodoxy" or "qualified orthodoxy," we may picture to ourselves a very pious Roman Catholic who should profess the infallibility of the Pope on condition of being permitted to revise and authorise his decisions.

In England a crisis was developed at the same time and with even greater intensity. In the early years of the century writers of ability had begun, side by side with the preaching of the Revival, to open to English thought the criticism of Lessing, the philosophy of Kant, the pious free thought of Herder and Schleiermacher. The flood of romanticism bore upon its troubled waves the most various elements, from the

sacramentarian mysticism of Oxford Puseyism to the soul conflicts of Coleridge and the daring utterances of Francis Newman and many other minds which had awakened to doubt. The storm broke, the separation took place, and about 1860 a new situation appeared. The publication of the celebrated volume "Essays and Reviews," followed by Bishop Colenso's work on the Pentateuch, stirred up England almost as much as Strauss's "Life of Jesus" had moved Germany twenty-five years before.

The value of these two rather commonplace works does not explain the noise they made and the influence they exerted. Their historic importance depends rather upon the conditions that produced them. The first was in great part the work of a group of professors of the University of Oxford, already the centre and headquarters of the Puseyite movement; the second bore the name of a dignitary in the Anglican Church, a missionary bishop in South Africa. Critical theology with its analytical method had notably entered the Established Church. Would it be possible to expel it and check its influence?

The burning point of the controversy was always the same; the authority of the Scriptures, the basis of all English piety, was falling to pieces under the actual discoveries of history. In vain was the attempt made to reassure troubled minds by the assertion that these criticisms bore only upon external details of no moral importance. English common sense understood perfectly that something quite different was in question, that in these exegetical discussions the whole question of religious authority was involved; that the Bible could no longer be read as in the former times, that a single one of its affirmations recognised as false or obsolete compelled the re-examination of all the others; that faith could no longer be understood as the subordination of the mind, but, on the contrary, that it called for activity of thought and freedom of judgment quite as much as humility of heart and obedience of will. Since that time, the revolution has made its way in England as elsewhere. It has crossed the ocean. It is going on in all the Churches of America,

whatever their constitution and symbol, forcing itself everywhere, even upon those who repel it, for the only weapons with which it can be fought are those by which it has hitherto won the day.

In Germany, however, the struggle was carried on upon a larger scale. It is most instructive to see the same experiment, made under differing conditions, verifying and confirming itself wherever it is repeated.

Biblical criticism inaugurated by Lessing and Semler took on in the German, Swiss, and Dutch Universities an ever more irresistible momentum. With de Wette, Baur, Credner, and Reuss it became a purely historical science, a chapter of literary history in which the dogma of theopneustics no longer found a place. The doctrine was no longer opposed; it was eliminated.

A graver symptom was that the basis of dogmatics had been displaced. After Schleiermacher it was no longer the infallible authority of the text of Scripture, as in the seventeenth century; it was the experience of faith, which, in the last analysis, rests upon itself. Thus it should suffice to itself and recommend itself solely by its moral evidence and actual efficacy. Strauss in 1841 told the history of the dogma of inspiration, and by the history itself explained its dissolution and registered its decease.[1] These evangelical theologians who refused to follow him to the end were none the less obliged to use a more and more severe historic and critical method in refuting him, and thus they spread the pestilence by their very attempts to stamp it out.[2]

Especially instructive is the history of Lutheran orthodoxy, which had been at first galvanised by the pietistic and romantic revival.

Desiring above all things to restore a system of authority, it groped about for a principle upon which to support it. Now it clung to the Confessions of Faith and the institutions of the Church, and again to Scripture, unable to decide to which finally belonged the supremacy.

[1] D. Strauss, "Die chrisl. Glaubenslehre," 1840-41, vol. i. pp. 75-353.
[2] Appendix LXXXIV.

Two tendencies in particular appeared, two mutually opposing and destructive theologies, one intrenched in the University of Rostock, the other finding its citadel in that of Erlangen.

In the north of Germany the important matter was the disciplinary and political point of view. The reaction was led by men who treated theology as lawyers and law as theologians. At bottom the advocates of authority have only one argument: the equal need of it by Church and State for their own continued existence. The question was no longer whether the Confessions of Faith and the Bible are infallible, but whether they ought to be. During this time Hengstenberg, to save the letter of the Bible, succeeded in compromising it by strange expedients which his fertile imagination and varied erudition had a never-failing supply. Others, like Stahl or Kliefoth, found it simpler to submit the interpretation of Scripture to the authority of the sixteenth-century Confessions of Faith and the constituted ecclesiastical authorities. Under pretext of safeguarding the work of the Reformation, they thus ended by denying its principle and restoring the opposing Roman Catholic principle, namely the subordination of the Bible to the official tradition of the Church.

In South Germany, at Erlangen, on the other hand, it was sought to bring the Church back to faith and life by the sincere culture of theological science. The biblical revelation was put above all else. But the Protestant principle, thus maintained and conscientiously applied, produced once again its inevitable consequences.

In the attempt to correct and perfect the ancient dogmas in the name of Scripture, men altered them in important respects and thus inevitably fell under the accusation of heresy. Thomasius, for example, fundamentally overturned the Christology of Nicæa and Constantinople by his theory of the *Kenosis*, according to which the divine Word in the incarnation was really stripped of its metaphysical attributes and, as it were, destroyed. In like manner Hofmann overthrew St. Anselm's theory of Redemption and replaced it by a more profound and more bib-

lical conception. Concessions more and more important were made to criticism and modern thought. There were even some notable defections. Kahnis, who had at first been caressed as the Benjamin of Lutheranism, passed over one fine day to the camp of independent theology. And more recently still, the venerable Delitzsch, after having fought for forty years on the side of the traditional views of the Old Testament, bowed before Wellhausen's criticism and yielded up to him his shattered weapons.[1]

Reference must here be made to the thoroughly subjective notion of the "Word of God" finally adopted by Frank, the most rigid dogmatist of the Erlangen school. The believer no longer finds the assurance of faith in an exterior authority, a divine infallible letter, but in Christian experience itself. The Word of God is a word of man with all his infirmities, ignorances, and errors, but penetrated by the Spirit of Christ and animated by his power of life and of salvation. Thus the Word of God is not shut up within the limits of the ecclesiastical canon, nor within these limits is it everywhere equally pure or equally discernible. Not the writings, but the writers, are inspired, and these according to the measure of their faith. Between their inspiration and that of Christians who came after them there may be a difference of degree; there is no difference of kind. Are we very far from the biblical thesis of Scherer or of Schleiermacher? [2]

Nothing in Protestant theology could prevail over the historical method and principle. Those who tried to arrest the current sooner or later found themselves carried along by it. This revolution was different from that of the eighteenth century. Voltaire and his disciples had no more the historic than the religious sense. On the other hand, a deeper piety inspires the new criticism. Prayer accompanies the discussion of the texts. What life is inwardly more consecrated to the truth than that of de Wette, or of Baur, Kuenen, or Reuss, or many other Protes-

[1] F. Delitzsch, "Neuer Kommentar über die Genesis," 1887.
[2] Frank, "System der christl. Gewissheit," 2 vols., 2d ed., 1881, etc.

tant Benedictines of our age, whose indefatigable labour, innocent of all lower motive, rises like a magnificent hymn to the God of truth? The Church may feel small concern for the attacks that come from without, from adversaries who, not having in themselves even the germ of religious faith, cannot comprehend the dogma which she puts forth; but quite otherwise must it be when criticism comes from within, and when the Christian spirit of her best sons protests against forms and ideas which it can no longer accept. Reform then becomes urgent, if a catastrophe is to be avoided.

It was Richard Rothe, one of the most pious of German theologians, who took upon himself the task of deducing the conclusions from this long history and drawing up the final sentence of the old theopneustic dogma. Energetically maintaining his faith in the supernatural character of the biblical revelation, he yet freely handled the text and the books of the collection itself, giving back to them their human and historic character. A miraculous action of the Spirit of God, substituting itself for the activity and intellectual responsibility of the sacred writers, an oracular infallibility communicated to the letter of Scripture, transforming it into a doctrinal code which the Christian thinker has only to open, a collection made and sealed by God himself to separate his work from that of man, were to him abstract fictions and vain superstitions. Therefore, he added, the ancient dogma is not to be in part reformed, it should be abandoned in its entirety. To hope to ameliorate it by attenuating it is to remain entangled in intolerable conditions. Sincerity makes this course a duty, and logic a necessity. There is no middle term between the rule of the letter and that of the Spirit. As of old, in the time of St. Paul, we must choose between the Law and the Gospel, between the spirit of servitude and the spirit of liberty.[1]

[1] R. Rothe, "Zur Dogmatik," 3d art.; "Die heilige Schriften," 2d ed. *Vide* Lichtenberger, "Hist. des idées relig. en Allemagne," etc., Vol. III.

III

The Last Bulwark of the System of Authority

Constrained to abandon the ancient positions, the advocates of authority fell back upon another. If, said they, infallibility does not belong to the entire collection of the Bible, it surely belongs to the words of Jesus Christ. Is not to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, sent forth by his Father, to be a Christian? And is not every discussion of the Words of Jesus Christ a lapse from Christianity? For theologians who thus reason, there is no question of the moral and religious authority by which Jesus and his Gospel command the conscience, but simply of the letter of the words put by our evangelists into the mouth of Jesus; and of their having been preserved in a collection and a code in which infallibility inheres, a body of notions of every kind, religious, moral, scientific, which must be accepted without examination or discussion—with joy when the reason is convinced, with submission when it is not, and even though it protest.

How shall we shut our eyes to the fact that this new position taken by the theologians of authority, far from being inexpugnable, as they imagine, has already been flanked by criticism and rendered more difficult to defend than all the others? A link is missing from the chain of reasoning, or rather, this necessary link has been hopelessly broken. It serves nothing to invoke the infallibility of Christ if the infallibility of his first historians has already been sacrificed to historic criticism. Have the words of which they seek to make a divine code, binding to the intelligence in each article, been transmitted to us without error, without misapprehension or mixture? If I must needs discuss this preliminary question, it is clear that I shall equally submit to discussion each saying of the Master whose literal meaning appears to me obscure or forced or inadmissible. I shall come to doubt whether it was entirely understood, or perfectly preserved by tradition; I shall ask whether the evangelists lost nothing of their Master's discourses or whether they did

not unconsciously mingle with them something of their own thought. Does not this question suggest itself with regard to the words of Christ as to the end of the world and his own near return? And again, who can read the long discourses of the Fourth Gospel, perceiving their dialectic, their peculiar colour and style, without attributing a larger or smaller part to the personal inspiration of the historian and to his theology?

Unquestionably, the words of Jesus in the first three Gospels bear a general stamp of living authenticity; but if we go on to the letter and to details, how many well-nigh insoluble questions arise? Which, for example, was the original form of the Beatitudes; that preserved by Luke or that given by Matthew? Where shall we find the actual words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, in Paul or in Mark? Of those passages in which Jesus predicts the ruin of Jerusalem, which is the true report? Such problems present themselves on every page of the three synoptic narratives, and the most sagacious exegetes give them different answers. It is impossible to reconstruct with certainty the *Logia* of the Lord.

These difficulties can be very naturally explained when we put ourselves in presence of the real history. Jesus spoke an Aramean dialect which is now lost. His words were always occasional, often paradoxical, always picturesque. He complained bitterly of the unintelligence of his hearers and even of his most intimate disciples. They themselves acknowledged it.[1] These discourses, collected at random, had been on the lips of the people for about forty years in widely known oral tradition before being fixed in writing. They served as themes for preaching, as weapons in controversy. They were translated into Greek as occasion required, with new forms for which no one assumed the responsibility.[2] Such was their condition when the evangelists collected them

[1] Matt. xi. 16, 25; Mark iv. 12, 23-25; Luke xxiv. 25; Matt. xv. 17, xvi. 8, 23; Mark ix. 13, 32, 38; x. 24, 38; John ii. 22, iii. 10, xvi. 12, xiii. 7, etc.

[2] Appendix LXXXV.

for their gospels some half century after the death of him who had uttered them. The fundamental harmony of this triple production undoubtedly proves the general authenticity of the teaching of Jesus, and permits the historian to grasp with certainty its master thought and true accent, and the gospel of Jesus, understood in the religious sense, is certain to live forever, manifesting its creative virtue through all the ages as in the earliest years. But, at the same time, the irreducible differences and persistent obscurities of our three equally canonical texts forever make it impossible to frame the letter of that infallible code of which some Christians ever dream. "My words," said Jesus, "are spirit and they are life." As to the spirit, the gospel is immortal; as to the letter, it is impossible to effect its authentic restoration.

But there is a yet graver question. In those words which historically are most certainly those of Jesus, how shall we not make a distinction between those common ideas which served as the framework and vehicle of his religious thought and the thought itself; between the notions which he had received from tradition or the current opinions of his people, and the original intuitions and inspirations which sprang from the depths of his consciousness? To communicate the latter must he not have borrowed not only the language, but the general methods of expression in use among his contemporaries? As Jesus belonged to his race by flesh and blood so he belonged to his generation and his time by such general knowledge as he might have of the world, its history and geography, of the courses of the stars, of celestial and subterranean regions. To remove Jesus of Nazareth from the conditions of every human existence, to deny him a natural development, the effect of home influences and social education, to endow him from the cradle with all knowledge and holiness, is to call in question his true humanity; it is to make him not divine, but an impossible, extra-natural child, a being fantastic and false, such as he is pictured in certain apocryphal gospels. It is indeed directly to controvert the statements of our Gospels, one of which at least says that he grew in wisdom and grace,[1] while the others

[1] Luke ii. 52.

paint him in vivid colours as a true Galilean among men of the same blood, the same language, the same religious tradition as himself.

Therefore we must not be surprised when very conservative theologians, with Mr. F. Godet at their head, resolutely break with the old Christology and deny the infallibility of Jesus. For his general culture he was reduced, like us, to the testimony of his senses and of men who were his contemporaries, and to national traditions bequeathed by their ancestors. This avowal, once made, opens a breach which cannot again be closed. What may in future pass through it criticism alone can tell. For Mr. Godet, for example, the opinions of Jesus as to the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch or the Davidic authorship of Psalm cx. are simply traditional opinions which leave untouched the freedom of modern science. His son, Mr. Georges Godet, goes a step further. He judges that it is not possible to attribute to Jesus the views of Newton or Laplace as to the structure of the universe, and that he probably held those which we find in the first chapters of Genesis.[1] Next comes M. Leopold Monod, with the question whether the same reflections do not apply to demoniac possession and demonology.[2] Still others arise and point out that Jesus had the same notions as all the pious Jews of his time as to the Kingdom of God and the imminent end of the world. The declaration of Jesus, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away!" is often cited with triumphant emphasis. What irony! The context shows that these words refer precisely to prophecies which, if the text has been correctly preserved, have been negatived by the events. We are then forced either to doubt the literal form of these discourses or to apply the Saviour's declaration to some other subject.

Those who say most often, and with most emphasis, "We do not reason with Christ," in reality do nothing else, especially in the matter of morals. On their own authority they limit the express prohibition of Jesus to take oath. Many of his special precepts are comprehensible

[1] G. Godet, "Revue de théol. de Montauban," July, 1891.
[2] Léopold Monod, "Le Problème de l'autorité," 2d ed., 1891.

only in view of the belief that the world is about to come to an end, or applicable only to a social organisation like that of the Galilean peasantry. The majority of Christians feel no hesitation in setting them aside or interpreting them as paradoxes which must be adjusted to the necessities of modern life.

We do not say that they are wrong, if their judgment is influenced by no interested motive; we simply say that the very necessity of such a process proves more clearly than anything else that it is impossible to transform the words of Jesus into an infallible and undebatable code.

Nothing is more false or more dangerous than to reduce his teachings to a system of doctrines to be believed or of absolute precepts to be blindly practised. He himself seems to have taken care to discourage those of his disciples who were tempted thus to lower his gospel to the rank of a law. He brought to the human spirit not fetters, but new powers. He wanted his disciples to be free agents, not passive subjects. For this reason he spoke in popular figures and similitudes. He would have them *find* what he taught. The letter, the form, were to him of secondary importance; he cared only for the spirit. To kindle this spirit in the souls of men, to impart to them the life by which he himself lived, this was all his ambition. He cast abroad his words of life with the security and confidence of the sower who fears not that his seed will be otherwise lost than by the incredulity of frivolous or wicked hearts; therefore he never thought of writing anything, nor gave any promise of special grace to those who afterward might wish to draw up the memoirs of his life. To believe in Jesus is an entirely different thing in the thought of Jesus himself from sharing all his beliefs or repeating the letter of his discourses. He was not claiming the submission or the sacrifice of the intelligence when he demanded faith in his person and message. Those who maintain this do not perceive that they fail to recognise the character and are changing the very nature of the faith he requires. He asks for an act of conscience and of heart, an act of religious and moral initiative, inaugurating a new interior life; they

offer an act of intellectual adhesion which may prove to be perfectly sterile. They confuse faith and belief. They are positively outside of the spirit of Jesus and misapprehend the specific content of his gospel of salvation. To believe in Jesus is an act which consecrates the heart, the conscience, the will, the whole spirit to the Heavenly Father whom Jesus reveals to us; it is to share his filial piety; it is to find in him the Father, with pardon and eternal life.

No doubt the Master spoke with authority, and not as the scribes. But this means that his authority was of another nature and came from another source than that of the scribes, who distinctly claimed to speak in the name of infallible texts. The authority of Jesus came, not from exterior title, but from the worth of his personality and the intrinsic quality of his words. These speak to the conscience with self-enforcing power, and, being received by faith, they identify themselves with conscience itself and become a part of it. They echo in our hearts like words of God, because they witness to themselves as truth, righteousness, and love. There is an infinite distance between this authority and the infallibility of any letter whatsoever. It belongs to another order. We shall see this better by and by, when we learn that the thought of Jesus was precisely to abolish religions of external authority and to found the inward religion of the Spirit; that is, a direct communion with God, established in the renewed conscience.

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT IS THE BIBLE

I

The Two Elements of the Answer

HAVING demonstrated at length what the Bible is not, it is time to say what it is. For this we summon the twofold testimony of history and of piety. One shows its true origin and constitution, the other sets forth its moral and religious action in the individual soul and in the life of humanity. The notion which results from historical research is wholly objective; that which grows out of the experiences of piety is subjective. From the synthesis of these two notions, so far as such synthesis may be possible, we shall form the modern dogmatic notion of the Bible.

II

The Historic Notion of the Bible

FROM the historic point of view the Bible represents a literary fact, or rather, a group of literary facts, which may and should be studied by a method analogous to that which in the last century or more has made a new thing of the history of nature. The modern historic method is simply a form and special application of the method of impartial and rigorous observation. When one is no longer blinded by dogmatic prepossessions, and has learned to distinguish between objective facts and the subjective impressions of the *ego*, the actual reality of the facts is revealed to him through the rent veil of the abstract entities and mythological fictions of the old theology, which each day helps to make more tenuous.

Thus is it, in the first place, with the text of the Bible. The study

and comparison of manuscripts have sufficed to show that in none of them is it preserved in its original purity; that the poverty of early methods of transmission effected changes in its essential constitution almost as grave as those suffered by other ancient texts, and that there is no other method of correcting the biblical texts than that everywhere else employed by scientific paleography. This being the case, it is easy to see on what chimeras theologians based their discussions and Catholic and Protestant synods their legislations in the seventeenth century, concerning the verbal inspiration *usque ad literam* of the Scriptures, since their original text is irrevocably lost and can only be reconstituted by approximation and conjecture.

By these means we establish still more singular and important literary phenomena. In what condition do we actually find the text of the Old Testament Scriptures? Instead of the homogeneity formerly attributed to them we find in the historic books a fabric woven of documents yet more ancient, whose vari-coloured threads are easily distinguishable, making clear that the Pentateuch and the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings assumed their present form at a very late date. Furthermore, what a medley of disarrangement do we find in the prophecies of Isaiah, Zechariah, and Jeremiah, to speak only of those whose want of connection is visible to the unaided eye! What is the Book of Psalms, if not the Psalter of the Jewish synagogue, made up of hymns of very different periods, already gathered into earlier collections? What shall we say under this head of Proverbs and the entire Solomonic literature, offshoots of which are found down to the second century before our era?

These phenomena are not confined to the Old Testament. We meet analogous conditions in the New, especially in the Gospels, the Acts, the Revelation of St. John, and even in the Pauline Epistles. The prologue of Luke and the literary analysis of the Gospel of Matthew and the Book of Acts demonstrate with irrefragable evidence that these are works of a second hand, made up of the elements of an earlier literature.

Certain specific facts still further enlarge the perspective thus newly opened of the origin and mode of composition of the biblical books. We merely cite the date now given to the Apocalypse of Daniel, and the relationship of this book to all succeeding apocalypses, making so plain to us the atmosphere in which Jesus lived, the framework of his ideas, the Messianic form of his consciousness, and the essentially eschatological character of his preaching. Then there is the affinity of the recently discovered Assyrian mythology with the early ethnic traditions of Israel, furnishing the starting-point of the religious evolution of this people. And finally we have a more exact knowledge of the rabbinical theology which forms the background of that of Paul, and of the Judeo-Alexandrian theosophy, the method, tendencies, and cardinal ideas which are carried into the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Fourth Gospel, and beyond without interruption to the writings of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, and into the Christology of the great councils. We are not here concerned with more or less questionable matters of detail; the question is of a positive historic method which has given a new setting to the old dogmatics and has accomplished this important revolution much more by its manner of setting forth the literary problems than by its way of solving them. What historian of the Bible to-day does not find himself compelled not only to accept the method, but also to co-operate in it?

Not less profoundly has the idea of the Biblical Canon been modified. Miracle has disappeared from the history of the canon as completely as from that of the text. The Old Testament Canon is formed of three successive collections of unequal authority, still recognisable in the Hebrew Bible, but confused and intermingled in the translations. The classification was made at an unknown date by rabbis still more unknown. Was there ever a final, official closure of the collection by the synagogue? We cannot know. But one thing is clearly visible, the pedagogic intent which guided those who first undertook the task.

The Canon of the New Testament only began to be fixed in the time

of Irenæus. Before that, no doubt, the books of the apostolic men were collected and kept with pious care. They were read at meetings for worship, or on the great anniversaries. But these collections differed in the different provinces, and the differences persisted for centuries. Nevertheless the Catholic Church, constituting itself around Rome as its capital, tended toward the unification of the rule of faith and the catalogue of the Christian Scriptures. Uncertainties there still were; a distinction which dogmatics has since effaced was established in the very canon between the *homologoumena*, or books everywhere accepted, and the *antilogomena*, or books questioned or of doubtful origin.

In disputable cases the Church made use of a twofold criterion. Was the book in conformity with the traditionally accepted faith? Was it of apostolic origin? Naturally the dogmatic reason took precedence of the other. That which was orthodox certainly came from the apostles, however uncertain or obscure might be its true origin. Its apostolicity was concluded from its truth or its religious utility. Thus the Second Epistle of Peter, a manifest pseudepigraph, was positively attributed to that author, and the Epistle to the Hebrews finally took its place among the Epistles of Paul, although its style, ideas, method, and spirit unite to make this hypothesis impossible. As the stamp of official warrant was everywhere deemed essential, the canonical authority of the Gospel by Mark was in like manner justified by connecting it with Peter and that of the Gospel of Luke by connecting it with Paul. Thus the authority of the sacred Scriptures and that of the apostolic college were finally made coincident.

It is not difficult to perceive the vicious circle underlying all reasonings of this nature. But the Church in pursuing them obeyed the instinct of the general Christian consciousness. And for that reason, no doubt, the choice at which she finally arrived was relatively most happy, and merits, if not the submission of criticism, at least the religious respect of all Christendom.

Nothing can prove more perfectly than this history that the Biblical

Canon is the work of the Church, instead of its foundation; that each Church is mistress of its own canon; that Luther was not presumptuous when in the name of the gospel he left out of his, or at least placed in the second class, three or four received books, and that the Reformed Church acted only within its right in drawing up in the Confession of Faith of La Rochelle its own list of canonical books, the authority of which was in its mind founded less upon the testimony of a human tradition than upon that of the Holy Spirit. At the same time we can see into what an irreconcilable inconsistency every Protestant Church falls, when, owning itself fallible, it seeks to corrects its human fallibillity by proclaiming as its fundamental dogma the external infallibility of the biblical canon which it has itself constituted.

In the light of history the books in their turn take on a new signification. The historic method applies to them the process and rules of interpretation which have everywhere else been accepted. It starts from the principle that every literary production belongs to its time and surroundings, and can be understood only by being restored to them. It is not a question of misconceiving or doubting the originality or inspiration of these writers, but of determining the intellectual and social horizon, the circle of ideas, the series of different circumstances, which conditioned their first appearance and consequently explain their special character and true bearing. Considered from this point of view the old Hebrew literature no longer hangs in the air, a series of miraculously given oracles. The individual books become facts woven into the very fabric of history. They bring to it added witness, being its religious fruits. The general law that a literature must be the expression of society, that it must proceed from the soul of a people and from the drama of its history, has been found true both for the literature of the Hebrews and for that of the first Christian ages. It remains only to establish as accurately as possible the relative chronology of the books, in order to reconstruct the general course of religious evolution to which they testify.

The biblical criticism of to-day is not only an introduction to the Bible, it is a chapter of literary history, naturally taking its place in the general history of religious literature, or, more correctly, in the universal history of the religion of humanity.

The conclusion of all these studies is simple and clear: so far as history is concerned, the Bible is a collection of historical documents which give positive evidence for the special religious evolution of which they are the product.

III

The Religious Notion of the Bible

The historical and literary questions implicated in the Bible have been and still are so fully and vehemently discussed only because behind them lie questions infinitely more grave, involving the future of the moral and religious life of humanity. Criticism and exegesis may more or less successfully reconstruct the character and sequence of the religious phenomena of history. But what is the moral value of these phenomena, what the importance of their history for the human conscience, how are we to judge of the religion of the Bible? These are new questions which infinitely transcend the scope and competence of the historic method. They address themselves to all that is deepest and most earnest in man, to his religious and moral consciousness, and the testimony of this consciousness we must now consider.

This testimony is of an order quite other than scientific. It is of the order of holiness. Holiness has its intuitions, its judgments, and experiences. But there is a danger in formulating them, because in translating them into intellectual propositions we incur the risk of altering or at least of masking their true nature, of opening the door to the questions of intellectualism when, as Pascal says, it is the heart that is their judge. I mean that instead of reasoning we have here to live, to experience, and to test.

The conviction that human life is a serious thing, that it is so only by

the consecration of the entire being to duty, that the history of humanity is the history of its moral education, that it has a purpose, and consequently, laws, is not the result of scientific demonstration, but an act of moral energy, which must be performed under penalty of resigning one's self to universal vanity and spiritual death. When one is in the state of mind which may properly be called moral piety, it is impossible not to be struck by the nature and power of that spirit of holiness which created the history of Israel, the life and work of Christ, and in them reveals itself. There, amid the shadows and sorrows of the times and the race, is a succession of men of God, each the spiritual father of the other, and all together creating in the bosom of humanity the high religion of the spirit. Their history is the history of God himself taking possession of the human soul, becoming the inmate of the human consciousness to such an extent as in the consciousness of Christ to be identified with it. Christ is the culmination of this divine history, because in him history finds its perfect work. Whoever, therefore, shall analyse the essential and permanent foundation—I do not say of the conscience of the Church, but of the modern conscience—such as eighteen centuries of Christian civilisation have made it, will discover its distinctive features and essential elements to be those of the conscience of Christ himself. No, the Christ did not come unavailingly into the world. Every soul that attains to a high moral and religious life bears his mark. The moral world in which we live is his work, and none may rebel against the intuitions, laws, aspirations, sufferings, of this new world; none may escape or evade them without the consciousness of a moral fall.

This is the profound explanation of the religious and moral action of the Bible upon the Christian consciousness. It is this persistently creative and stimulating action upon the moral life which gives it authority. Its authority is wholly spiritual; it depends, not upon the letter, but the spirit of the Scriptures, and appeals to the mind and heart. It is freely accepted, because it exists only so far as it becomes one with the experiences or the present aspirations of piety. It has no more

need of official verification, of outward attestation, than the light which enlightens the eye, or the duty which commands the conscience, or the beauty which ravishes the imagination. The efficacy of the divine word is at once the inward sign, the measure, and the foundation of its authority.

It is neither permitted nor possible to identify the Bible with the revelation of God in the life of humanity, for this revelation, in its progressive development in history, is universal and permanent; it cannot be shut up in any document or any special institution. But since the revelation to Israel was more evident and of a higher character than any other, in the preaching of the prophets, of Christ and of his apostles, the Bible is by no means to be separated from it; it makes a part of it, since the preaching itself constituted it. We may therefore say that the Bible continues and perpetually maintains the revelation of God in the souls of men, keeping it fresh and strong by its primitive simplicity.

Thus the Bible, drawing its authority from its own efficacy, has in itself the means of making itself immediately recognised by the soul that is athirst for righteousness and truth. At the secret contact of the conscience with holiness a moral evidence is called into being which is essentially the witness of the Divine Spirit with the human spirit. The Reformers made the mistake of applying the inward witness of the Holy Spirit to a mass of literary and historical questions with which it has nothing to do, and for this reason their dogmatic has not escaped the reproach of fanaticism and illuminism; but restricted to the sanctifying action of the Bible, I mean of its essential spirit, no witness can be more trustworthy. It is as legitimate as the influence of the moral imperative upon the honest conscience, and no more mystical than that.

Christians may deceive themselves, and they often do deceive themselves, when they reason from their inward experiences to the causes that produced them, or the doctrinal conclusions that flow from them. But these experiences remain none the less moral facts, bearing eloquent witness to the power of the Bible. What other book like this can awaken

dumb or sleeping consciences, reveal the secret needs of the soul, sharpen the thorn of sin and press its cruel point upon us, tear away our delusions, humiliate our pride, and disturb our false serenity? What sudden lightnings it shoots into the abysses of our hearts! What searchings of conscience are like those which we make by this light? And when we have gained a right apprehension of our shortcomings and spiritual poverty, when the need of pardon, the hunger for righteousness, and the thirst for life torture the soul to desperation, what other voice than that of the Son of man has power to allay our pain, convince us of the love of the Father, the love that passeth knowledge, in which all shame and remorse are swallowed up, and the flame of a holy life is kindled in the soul? The word which pierced us like a sharp sword now sheds itself like balm over all our wounds, like consolation over all our sorrows. It becomes a source of inward joy, a strength for life, and a hope which shines beyond death itself. These experiences, moreover, are facts. This light shining into the darkness of the inner life is a fact; this repentance and confusion, this spiritual new birth, these aspirations toward goodness and toward God, this shame of hidden sin, this thirst for eternal life, are facts. The power which produces such effects is also a fact. The word which draws us so irresistibly to God and so invincibly attaches us to him can come from none but him. And it does not depend upon any particular dogma. Some who have passed through these moral experiences have found no difficulty in following to the end the results and consequences of historic criticism, and abandoning the supernatural notion of the Bible, yet have none the less preserved for the Bible an indestructible sentiment of tender respect and religious veneration.

Such is the inspiration which piety feels and finds in Holy Scripture. It has nothing in common with the infallibility of the letter. It is a power of life which makes itself recognised as such, because it gives life. It requires and implies neither perfection of form nor the magic of miracle nor any official investiture of its instruments. Piety has not

the slightest concern for the things that preoccupy the theologians who are building it up on human authority. It is not scandalised by the halting language of prophet or apostle, nor by the legendary character of some narratives, nor by the vices of this or that method of reasoning. On the contrary, in its eyes the excellency of the treasure shines forth all the more brightly as its casket is the more uncomely; it enjoys the divine liquor without care for the clay which holds it. Has it not in itself the touchstone which makes known the value of the treasure, and does not the life-giving fragrance of the liquor reveal its origin?

This experience of the Christian is expanded and confirmed in the age-long experience of the Church. All Christian communions have adhered to the Bible in order to remain in contact with the original source of their religious life. If some of them, like the Roman Catholic and Orthodox [Greek] Churches, have without denying it put their traditions above its authority, if they have thus relegated it to the shadow, they have not escaped an equal detriment to liberty of conscience and to that sound integrity which is the life of piety. Wherever the Bible is held in honour it remains the safeguard of Christian liberty, an ever-living agent of reformation, a power for progress and for life.

History sees in the Bible a collection of historic documents, and this is no crime on its part. Individual and collective piety reads in these documents a divine history, it perceives in them a "Word of God"; and none can dispute the validity of this experience without calling in question the value of the moral life itself, whether in its deepest roots or its purest and most lofty manifestations.

IV

An Attempt at Synthesis

From the synthesis of the historic notion and the religious notion we should be able to draw the dogmatic definition of the authority of Scripture. The reconciliation of the two, however, is neither spontaneous nor

immediate. Springing from two very different mental operations, responding to needs of different nature, they stand over against one another in seeming mutual contradiction, as is often the case when scientific theses first come in contact with moral theses. The devout heart overleaps the normal and uniform play of second causes, divines and everywhere predicates the presence of God, for the invincible reason that in itself it has immediate consciousness of him. But scientific observation, excluding from its domain all search after the first cause, recognises nowhere any special and distinct act in the historic nexus of events. Thus the two orders, instead of tending to harmony, appear to diverge more and more widely. Yet shall science forbid faith to adore?

To reconcile the two is the task of modern Christian thought. It will not be accomplished in a day nor by any single man. But far from reconciliation being impossible or chimerical, the question, in so far as Scripture is concerned, has in these last days made a long step toward solution. The solution will appear more clearly when the last remnants of the old dogma of verbal inspiration and supernatural canon shall have been cleared away from the dogmatic field. This ancient dogma from which the infallibility of the Bible was deduced can in no case be rehabilitated, for it implies a double miracle, which criticism has shown to be a double historic fiction.

This being the case, it is important that both faith and criticism should come to a more distinct consciousness of their rights and their limits. Conflicts break out between them only because each inconsiderately trespasses upon the territory of the other. Both the religious and the scientific spirit need educating. The war between them is abating in proportion as this education makes progress. Already their harmony upon many points is becoming evident.

Upon the question of the biblical canon the testimony of both is identical. The data of history and of piety are reciprocally coincident and confirmatory. Criticism demonstrates that at least in the beginning the catalogue of the sacred books had no fixed limits. Piety is

continually ascertaining and treasuring up that which for it is the "Word of God" outside of as well as within the present limits of the sacred canon. It finds more edification in the book of Maccabees than in the story of Esther or of Samson. The inspiration of the Epistle of Polycarp appears to it more truly apostolic than that of the Second Epistle of Peter.

Historical criticism shows the variety of the books of the Bible; it ascertains those differences of date and authorship, of ideas and of intentions, of matter and of form, which make them to differ; it makes clear that they vary widely as to religious and moral development. But the piety of the unlearned, guided solely by its instincts, ascertains the same facts. The new theology is greatly reproached for making these distinctions in the traditional Bible, but every Christian without hesitation or scruple does the same thing as a matter of practice. He always turns to those parts of Scripture which build up his faith and comfort his sorrow, and passes by those which are only dry and sterile ground. Not more for practical piety than for enlightened thought is the Bible of the Churches identical with the "Word of God."

It is another error to say that piety needs an outward attestation, a miracle, in order to recognise and accept this divine word. The gospel appears to it no less divine and salutary after the historic study of the traditions about the birth of Christ has proved to it that no positive conclusion can be reached as to the way in which Christ came into the world. John the Baptist did no miracle. Was he the less a prophet? Jesus proclaimed him as the greatest of all prophets. We know nothing of Amos or Isaiah except their preaching. When they move our consciences, do we for this reason less surely discover in them the presence of the Holy Spirit?

From the historic and literary point of view the Bible presents itself as nothing else than what in other cases we call a great classic literature. The Old Testament is the classic literature of Judaism, the New Testament is the classic literature of Christianity. Just as a literature of

this class is the finished expression of a nation's genius, so the Bible is the cogent expression of two spirits, of Israel and of nascent Christianity. Do we need any other reason to explain its charm and its irresistible influence? Piety asks for nothing more than the substantial nutriment it finds here. It is true that a classic literature is only relatively perfect, and that, being a human creation, it shares the condition and destiny of human things. Inevitably it ages, and that increasingly, and in the process it becomes in many respects unadapted to the conscience of the generations which come long after it. A discord results; it does not exclude veneration, but it does prevent servitude. Time and surroundings must be taken into account. Adaptation becomes necessary. Thus critical reflection teaches us; thus piety instinctively does. No Christian, however conservative he may imagine himself to be, reads the Bible to-day without taking some things and leaving some; without subjecting the ancient text to some sort of translation, more or less thorough, without which he would soon find that it had ceased to help him.

The letter of the Bible, then, is no longer the infallible rule of religious thought, the oracle of absolute and eternal truth. Yet none the less does the Bible continue to discharge a double and essential function in the life of churches, families, and individuals. It is no longer a code, but it remains a testimony; it is no longer a law, but it is a means of grace. It does not prescribe the scientific formulas of faith, but it does remain the historic fountain of Christian knowledge.

1. *The Function of the Bible as a historic document.* The religion of the gospel had its prologue and preparation in the moral and religious life of Israel, without which the gospel could not have been understood. Interrogated with discernment by criticism and exegesis, the Old Testament gives evidence of this historic preparation, makes it possible to grasp its true nature and progress, and serves as the indispensable introduction to the New. The form of the religious experience wrought in

the souls of the Hebrew prophets determined that of the religious experience which was wrought out and perfected in the souls of Christ and his first disciples.

The New Testament is the authentic and sincere expression of Christianity in the freshness of its earliest days. It gives us a clear idea of the essence of the gospel, enables us to discern it with accuracy, and thus to apprehend it in its pristine truth. It is the first link, so to speak, in the Christian tradition; but because it is the first, this link dominates all that follow. No single Church could give up the Bible thus understood, without cutting itself off from communion with the original source of its life. Thus the witness becomes a judge, for it makes possible a judgment of the value of all subsequent forms of the tradition. The historic document which attests the nature of the essence of Christianity at its beginning is still the surest defence against Catholic traditionalism. In vain, for example, does the Church of Rome insist that the worship of the Virgin and the Saints, auricular confession, the sacrifice of the Mass, the supremacy of Peter, are matters of faith, essential to the Christian religion and essential to salvation. So long as they were unknown or disputed in this first age, Catholic dogmatism hangs baseless in the air, unless it should be maintained that the apostles and Christ himself did not preach the whole Gospel of Salvation; and it may be considered as remaining outside of the Christian religion itself.

This historic document none the less guards us against the illusions and dreams of private inspiration. Apart from history, inspiration is lost in the limitless fields of fancy. It has neither compass nor rudder. In vain the mystagogues and illuminati appeal to the inward witness of the Spirit. The Christian spirit can be nothing other than the Spirit of Christ. Psychologically the witness of the Spirit is nothing else than the assurance of the gospel, believed and experienced in the heart. But the gospel came to us by historical tradition. We did not invent it; it was preached, that is, given, to us. Assuredly Christian inspiration never ceases to draw from it an indefinite progression of action and of

thought; but without ever breaking the historic continuity which joins it to its origin.

2. *Function of the Bible as a means of grace.* It not only makes us know historically the religious experience wrought out in the soul of Christ and of his immediate disciples, but it begets and continues a line of disciples, a tradition of life, by repeating the same experience in each successor. It not only reveals life, it propagates it. It is only a preaching, and a human preaching of the gospel, but it dates from an epoch of creative inspiration, artless popular faith, and burning fervour. It is altogether the most simple and the most sublime preaching, most meagre in form, most efficacious in power. The Holy Spirit breathes through and animates its least important pages. The "Word of God"—I mean that word which arouses the conscience and gives it peace, which pardons and sanctifies, reproves and consoles—speaks through it with an accent which the devout heart hears nowhere else. Piety ever returns to it and never wearies of it. Protestantism is therefore fully justified, after giving up the vain attempt to make an infallible oracle of the Bible, in guarding for it the place of honour which it took in the sixteenth century and from which no one can ever depose it. As said the man of all men perhaps most vigorously opposed to the inspiration and authority of the letter, Edmond Scherer, "The Bible will ever be the book of power, the marvellous book, the *book* above all others. It will ever be the light of the mind and the bread of the soul. Neither the superstitions of some nor the irreligious negations of others have been able to do it harm. If there is anything certain in the world, it is that the destinies of the Bible are linked with the destinies of holiness on earth." [1]

[1] E. Scherer, "Ce que c'est que la Bible," *Rev. de Théol.*, Strasburg, vol. ix. p. 377.

V

Conclusion

It needed only to narrate the long and tempestuous elaboration of the Catholic and the Protestant dogmas of authority to show them both crumbling away under the triple protest of history, the reason, and the Christian consciousness. The first rests on a political, the second on a literary fiction. Both are the fruit of an exaggerated and misunderstood craving for authority, and a formal and abstract logic, deducing from an *a priori* postulate, not that which is, but that which ought to be. A diplomatic and utilitarian argument is at the basis of all these systems of authority. The tribunal is declared infallible, not because it actually is such, but because there is need that it should be such. Men do not observe what the Church is in its actual concrete history; they do not see it compounded of good and evil, now fervent and heroic, now ambitious and yielding to the grossest superstitions; always in its faith, its catechisms, and its worship mingling the gospel of Christ with the changing conceptions of the century through which it is passing. They place it outside of the unescapable conditions of every human institution and make it a pure abstraction, a metaphysical entity which is first deified and then used as a formidable instrument of religious tyranny. So with the Bible. Men do not study the real Bible, they do not consider the extremely diverse phenomena which it presents, the dead or superannuated ideas and customs, the concrete diversity of the books and the inspirations which meet in it; they identify it immediately with the very revelation of God. It is no longer a human book, it is an abstract entity of which they make an idol, before which they prostrate themselves and seek to prostrate reason and conscience, as if they would convince themselves of the reality of its authority by the very excess of the superstition with which they surround it, and especially by the excess of energy with which they maintain its authority.

Yet between Catholicism and Protestantism there is this difference,

that one has succeeded where the other has failed. The Catholic system of authority has at last established and completed itself by the Vatican decree. The Protestant system of authority has forever broken down. But we must not judge of these events by appearances. When we go to the bottom of things the relations are reversed; Catholicism is dying of its victory, while Protestantism is finding in its apparent defeat a means of salvation and a renewal of its youth.

It was to maintain peace and unity in Christendom that the Roman Church laid emphasis upon the infallibility of its tradition and the divine origin of the power of its bishops. Never was purpose more ill attained nor hope more greatly disappointed. The peace of the Church, maintained by excommunications meekly sanctioned by the power of the State, was only a series of bloody executions and irremediable ruptures. Is there in the religious annals of humanity a darker page than the history of the persecutions, massacres, and scaffolds which follow in uninterrupted succession from the destruction of the Donatists in Africa to the proscription of the Huguenots in France? What a concert of groaning voices, of martyr plaints and rebellious protests, went up during this period of twelve centuries from Constantine to Louis XIV, calling earth and heaven to witness the cruel effects of the religious tyranny of Rome! Was ever altar more copiously watered with innocent blood than the altar of this Christian Moloch whose name was Catholic Unity? And what was the result of this policy of authority? Was unity at least saved?

In the early centuries of the Middle Ages Christendom was split into two nearly equal parts, and since then all the efforts of the most persevering and subtile diplomacy have been powerless to bring together the Greek and Latin Churches. The same authoritative and intransigent policy, the same dogma of the infallibility of the Church, brought about a new scission. The Western Church was in its time cut in two. Half of Europe drew away from Rome and became Protestant. From that time each triumph of the Papal authority has caused damage to the

Catholic Church, a loss of its internal liberties, a diminution of vitality and spiritual strength. In the seventeenth century it was the extermination of Jansenism; at the beginning of the nineteenth the end of Gallicanism. Neither St. Bernard nor Gerson, nor yet Bossuet, would be tolerated in the Church to-day without an act of submission. The council of the Vatican, which finally concentrated the infallible tradition and absolute authority in the person of the Pope, made a still wider moral hiatus in the Church. After having broken with half Christendom, the Catholicism of the Syllabus succeeded—at least in those countries which are nominally its own—in breaking with modern culture, with the principles of public law accepted by all civilised nations, with the scientific method and the most legitimate aspirations of the conscience. No doubt the Catholic principle has triumphed within the Church, but without it has destroyed itself by its own excesses, and no longer appears to minds having a degree of liberal culture as anything but a spectre of the past. The dogma of the infallibility of the Pope was still-born, for no one thinks of considering it from the point of view of religious history and philosophy. The majority even of those who accept it omit it by preterition; for the others it is only a sort of law of politics or social decorum, which it would show as much bad taste to contradict as intellectual simplicity to take seriously.

In Protestantism the attempt to build up a system of authority could not succeed because it was vitiated by a radical inconsistency. Therefore the work of those who conducted it resembles the sand heaps which children make when they think to carry the top higher by piling on it the sand which they pull out from below. The critical spirit in religion was twin-born with the Reformation. If the gospel is the basis of Protestantism, free inquiry is its necessary form. It cannot give up either without committing suicide.

With Luther and Calvin the Christian conscience was definitively recognised as autonomous. It can never again retrace its steps nor again take on the yoke. The idea of setting up in Protestantism an external

infallible authority is only a survival of the principle which was defeated in the sixteenth century. We should not be surprised at these relapses nor anticipate their long duration. In the time and countries where reaction has seemed to triumph it has given only a wretched copy of a stunted and decapitated Catholicism. In other places the discord between the Catholic and Protestant principles has become manifest. To it is due the ills and agitations of modern Protestant Churches. By the logic of ideas and the force of things they are taking part in the final struggle, in which no choice remains but either to turn back again to the Roman Catholicism whence they once came out, or to rise joyfully and vigorously from the religion of the letter to the religion of the Spirit. A near future will show which sentence they pronounce upon themselves.

BOOK III

THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

BOOK III

THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE RELIGIONS OF AUTHORITY TO THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

Preliminary Dialogue

ADELPHI is a friend of my childhood with whom I have the habit of discussing whatever I write. He is not fond of novelties, and he is a pretty good logician; two excellent endowments for speedily discovering the difficulties of a new opinion and the vice of specious reasoning. Concerned before all else with the interests of the religious life, he holds by tradition and defends all in it that is most respectable and legitimate. For me to come to a clear understanding with him on the subject is equivalent to settling my account with religion itself.

I therefore sent to him the first two parts of this work as soon as they were finished, and awaited a visit from him. A week later he entered my study, and, handing me my manuscript, entered without preamble upon the subject.

I

Authority and Religion

Adelphi.—Your twofold historical exposition has greatly disturbed my mind. It would be possible to take you up in some matters of detail, to argue such and such of your statements, but not to shake the whole. For my part, while I feel incompetent to refute you, I still rebel against your conclusion. It seems to me to reach farther than you suspect. When you sap the basis of authority you destroy the very foundations of religion.

I.—Are you not confounding authority with religion?

Adelphi.—Not at all; but I consider them inseparable. However, here are the three objections, or rather the three difficulties, which I desire to submit to you:

1. The idea of religion necessarily implies that of authority.

2. The Christian religion is essentially a history, or, if you prefer, a manifestation of God in history. But all history, to be believed, supposes the attestation of witnesses.

3. The Christian religion, as you yourself state, has hitherto been a religion of authority; it has always created its own authority within itself. Is not this a proof or a presumption that it cannot do without one?

I.—My dear Adelphi, in all this I recognise your methodical mind. I thank you for thus laying down the programme and direction of our discussion, it will be by so much the shorter and clearer. You are right in thinking that I have not written this long history of the Catholic and Protestant dogmas of authority without having had occasion to reflect upon the three difficulties which you set before me. No doubt the first is the gravest in your eyes, since you connect with it the very destiny of religion upon earth. Shall we begin with it? How, then, do you understand that authority and religion are inseparable things and notions?

Adelphi.—Their connection is visible enough. Is religion anything else than the recognition and acceptance of the authority of God? What is it to adore, if not to prostrate ourselves humbly and unquestioningly before his Majesty? What is it to pray, if not to proclaim the sovereignty of his will? What is it to believe, to confide one's self to him, if not to abandon one's self entirely to his providence and obey his decisions, even when we find them incomprehensible? The people then are right when they hold that a religion without authority is not a religion.

I.—The people and you are a thousand times right. Far from disputing your observations on this point I should be inclined to go even

farther. It is the essence of religion to recognise and accept the authority of God; to recognise it and rebel against it would be the essence of impiety. But have you observed that when you express yourself thus you limit the notion of authority? It is no longer any abstract authority you please; it is the authority of God. And in this connection, please recall to mind that in those parts of my book which you have read there is not one word of hostility to the absolute authority of God. The question has been only of the authority of the Church, or the Pope, and of the authority of a book, the Bible. My intention has even been to make the divine authority more complete in the souls of Christians, by setting aside and putting in their true place the human authorities which men have attempted to put in the place of his authority, and which veil or misrepresent him under the pretext of making him more actual and concrete to us.

Adelphi.—I do not misunderstand your intention, and I do you full justice for it. I simply ask if the enterprise to which it has impelled you will not lead to a contrary result? In any case, let me continue. We agree as to the starting point of our discussion. We both recognise and accept the sovereign and indisputable authority of God. Let us now leave the abstract and place ourselves in the reality of experimental and vital religion. The authority of God manifests itself to the devout conscience as a revelation, a word of God, and this word holds in subjection the spirit of the man who hears and understands it; it is the truth which holds sway over the reason, the commandment which rules the will, the inspiration which exalts and enraptures the whole soul.

I.—Truly, I could not express it better, and it gives me infinite pleasure to hear you. Is not that what the old theologians used to call the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, and upon which they rested the specific assurance of the Christian faith?

Adelphi.—Unquestionably. But I have not finished. This word of God has objectified itself in history. It has gone out into all the world by the mouth of those whom the Bible calls "men of God." Under

various unlike forms it has been everywhere present and audible, but in a higher manner, more clearly and purely, in Israel and in the Christian Church than elsewhere. Do you not admit this declaration of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Having spoken to the fathers at diverse times and in diverse manners, God has spoken to us in these last days by a Son"? Is not the Bible from thenceforth more particularly a "Word of God," and as such invested with a divine authority?

I.—In these vague and general terms we are in accord. But the problem arises as soon as we begin to define, on one side the limits of the Bible, or Sacred Canon, and on the other the kind and degree of the authority of each one of the books comprised in this collection. You have just spoken of the divine authority of the Bible; you do not understand this absolutely, as if God spoke to you personally and without intermediary. The men who served him as organs were fallible, they had a specific mental constitution; they shared the ignorances or the delusions of their contemporaries. There is, then, in their writings, a certain number of general ideas, of natural and historical data which, belonging to the general or profane order, cannot be considered as divine revelations. Whence it follows inevitably that, to discern the "witness of God" in the Bible we must bring to it examination and criticism. Answer me frankly. Do you exercise no criticism upon any book or any text of Scripture? Do you know a theologian of our day who abstains from it, or even a simple Christian whose piety, nourishing itself upon the Bible, makes no choice or instinctive selection?

Adelphi.—I must confess that we all do this.

I.—Then you no longer admit the infallibility of the Bible. Why are you then scandalised when I perceive and describe the inevitable and unconditional death of this old dogma? Where we have to do with an oracle claiming infallibility, a single verified error is enough to oblige us in conscience to examine all the rest of its utterances. It is no longer the book which supports the truth of its teaching; it is the elevation, the power, the general truth of the teaching recognised by the conscience,

which supports the moral and religious authority of the book. But this authority, still maintained like that of an eminent master or a masterpiece of art, has no longer anything in common with the dogmatic notion of authority: *Auctoritas valet sine ratione.* That has forever vanished. The outward authority of the letter has given place to the inward and purely moral authority of the Spirit.

Adelphi.—Permit me to defend my various positions in their order. Is not the word of Christ that authority, at once historic and divine, which you discover nowhere?

I.—Do you not foresee my reply to your question? It is with the word of Christ precisely as with the word of God himself. Neither of them reaches us without intermediary. We know the words of Christ through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who, in their turn, drew them either from earlier collections already variously translated into Greek, or from an oral tradition nearly half a century old. Short of proclaiming *a priori* the infallibility of this human literary transmission, how can we affirm the absolute authenticity of the letter of these words, or of the sense in which this letter was taken by the early Christians? Are you not struck with the fact that Jesus felt no concern to fix for the future the form of his discourses? It is as if he had feared in advance that someone might make a code of them like that of the Mosaic law. Besides, were the case otherwise, all Christians believe that Jesus was truly man, that is to say, a concrete man, a man of his race, times, and surroundings. I have already pointed out that in cosmogony, literature, physics, physiology, he inherited and frankly made use of the notions usual and current among the Pharisees, his contemporaries. Will you maintain that these notions are by that fact clothed with divine authority, and that it is not permitted to discuss them, or hold other views on these subjects? Not only were all the words of Jesus suggested by circumstances, and appropriate to the state of mind of his hearers, but they were also wrapped up, like luscious fruits, in a dry and withered husk which must be pierced if we would reach the nutritious, invigorat-

ing marrow. Far from avoiding criticism and exegesis, that is, intelligent attention and profound study, his words call for it more imperiously than all the rest. God has willed that we should search for the thought of Christ, as for his own, in that rendering of it which men have left for us, upon our personal responsibility, that is to say, in full liberty and with all the energy of our faculties.

Adelphi.—But at least, have you no pity for those humble, troubled minds who fear that the obligation to pick and choose in Scripture will rob them of their assurance or disturb the peace of their faith? Will you not leave them a *minimum* of ideas or facts which shall be authoritative for them?

I.—The lot of these humble believers concerns me to such a degree that I had no rest until I could discover for them in place of an outward infallible authority, which nowhere exists, a ground of assurance accessible to all. There is none other but the witness of the Holy Spirit, as Calvin put in so strong a light, and which they have mistakenly abandoned, to take refuge in certain, as they believe, immutable results of criticism. As to that minimum of belief of which you speak, do you not feel how humiliating and at the same time perilous such a poor solution must be? What Christian could wish for more or less than a full and true Christian belief? The conception of a minimum of belief is the result of the conflict between orthodoxy and rationalism, and the irremediable defeat of the former. Unable longer to maintain complete orthodoxy, some have contented themselves with a diminished and mitigated orthodoxy, which is of all things in the world the least satisfying to reason and piety, the most indefinite and inconsequent. They make the best of a bad business, they yield a great part of the field to criticism, and forbid it to touch the rest. But who determines and delimits this minimum? An infallible authority? By no means. The theologians make the selection upon their personal authority. They offer and insist upon the result of their own subjective criticism, with one breath avowing that they are fallible men, and with another assuming to formulate,

in the name of God himself, the infallible rule of Christian belief. Can we imagine anything more inconsistent? And is it not time to overcome this old dualism and build up a theology at once more believing and more scientific? [1]

Adelphi.—I have no reply to make; I suffer much, both in my reason and my faith, from the situation which you describe and which I find untenable. You do not take into account the drift of criticism. When one enters upon it he must go on to the end. My criticism, unless I make myself a pope, has no right to determine yours, or to condemn it as sacrilege. And further, I see that those who believe themselves to be and claim to be the most conscientious continually make concessions, to-day as to dogma, to-morrow as to the history of the Old Testament and the New. What they call the deposit of the traditional faith grows smaller every day, melting like the winter's snow in the spring sunshine. But how shall we get out of this no thoroughfare in which Protestant Christians are shut up? You open for them only the door of an unlimited subjectivity. Why should you be surprised that some of them look longingly toward Catholicism, and others ask for a more solid foundation for their faith?

I.—At last the great word is out, the scarecrow with which men think to reply to everything and ward off all dangers. We must avoid subjectivism, and for that reason we will not have a subjective criterion. But can there be any other? Consider calmly for a moment. What criterion do those employ who inveigh against the new theology? Do they think with another's brain, or reason with another's reason? By virtue of what principle do they repel the claim of the Catholic Church to infallibility? Why do they prefer the authority of the Bible to that of the Koran? Does not their judgment upon these external authorities leave them profoundly peaceful? And yet is it anything other than a

[1] It is needless to explain that we are speaking here of religious authority for the individual faith. The religious Society, the Church, has need of a rule. But that is an entirely different matter, which will find its place elsewhere.

subjective judgment? Is it not inconsistent to permit me to judge by my conscience and reason of the value of an authority and then forbid me to examine its decisions one by one?

Let us go farther. What is faith—I mean personal and living faith—if not the individual appropriation of the truth? How, then, shall faith be other than subjective? And can Christian assurance be found outside of the jurisdiction of one's consciousness? You fear that this foundation is not sound? But of what nature is the foundation of morality? Do you admit that there is anything sounder than the sense of duty? Can an exterior authority in morals ever attain to that profound and sweet security enjoyed by a conscience that clearly sees its duty and performs it?

If morality does not suffer from the subjective character of its principle, why should religion, especially the Christian religion, which in the last analysis is identified with the highest morality, and forms with it an ideal unity?

The door which I seek to open to souls in pain is the door of the religion of the Spirit and of liberty. We were speaking in the beginning of the authority of God. Compare with it that of any human institution, whether priestly hierarchy or sacred books. The first is within, in the conscience and the reason, precisely because it is spiritual and moral; it meets only one obstacle—sin. It carries with it the light of evidence, the certitude of truth, the peace of a finished reconciliation. All our faculties find in it their full expansion, because it fortifies them inwardly with an new energy, stimulates them, and manifests itself only in their exercise and legitimate satisfaction. On the contrary, the authority of a priest or a book, as compared with that of God, remains of necessity external, like a human law, and inevitably becomes a yoke which either weighs down the human being or urges him to revolt. What share in what we call the incredulity of our fellow citizens shall we not attribute to the religious authority which they accept in their childhood, and execrate or contemn on arriving at years of reason? Do you under-

stand now that when I attack these old systems I do it in the spirit of the reformers, who shook off all human authority that they might the more firmly and absolutely establish the authority of God in the consciences of men?

To this inward religion of the Spirit God seeks to lead his Church. He stirs her up, harasses her, instructs her by the scientific development of our time; he shows her the ancient shelters in which for a time she took refuge falling into ruins, and thus constrains her to enter upon the path that leads to wider horizons. What else are the plaints and threats of reaction lifted up by timid believers but reproaches addressed to God himself?

Can we prescribe to God by what methods he ought to speak to us or on what conditions we will recognise and heed his word? All this is unreasonable. The divine work is mysterious, but it is good and perfect. It is we who are shortsighted, our requirements that are puerile, our rebellions that are meaningless. Why should we continue to insist upon an external infallible authority? There is none. In our religious indolence we would have abdicated and taken refuge in it; and God will not have his children abdicate; he wants no inert spirits in his kingdom. That is why he tells us by the lips of Jesus: "He that seeketh findeth," having made the search for spiritual benefits the very condition of their possession.

I had become animated as I drew this conclusion from our conversation. Adelphi was thoughtfully silent. For a moment the discussion was suspended, but it was soon resumed.

II

Historic Testimony and Criticism

ADELPHI.—Hitherto we have confined ourselves to considerations too exclusively formal. If dogmatic authority implies infallibility, if it

can escape critical examination only at this price, I admit that you have gained your point. Infallibility exists only in God, and we do not believe that he has delegated it to anyone. It exists nowhere in this world. But because such infallibility has no existence, does it follow that authority has not an important part in religion and that religious beliefs in particular do not for the most part rest upon it?

I.—Take care, you have just made an important concession. You are giving up your arms. If I understand you, you are hoping to maintain the method of authority, and authority itself, by sacrificing infallibility. But what is an authority that is not infallible? I will not say that it is nothing, but I will say that it is limited and relative. In such a case, I have nothing to say against it. Moses, Isaiah, Paul, John, Peter, are to me and will continue to be, in the religious order, men of God clothed with a very great moral authority; I put myself to school to them, I profit by their lessons, they are incomparable models and precious teachers; but, after all, I am still free to choose between their ideas, to criticise their reasonings, to reject such of their teachings as are to me unassimilable, and to retain those which my present light shows me to be just and true. Please observe that in the philosophic realm Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, are authorities of this order. But all this has nothing in common with the dogmatic authority which we are discussing. Dogmatic authority reigned when the famous *Magister dixit* was enough by itself alone to establish and defend the truth. An authority which one has the right to discuss, to defend, or blame, is not an authority.

Adelphi.—I understand it otherwise. We are not talking about a fallible authority, but about infallibility restricted to certain objects, in a certain domain, absolute as to the degree of certitude, limited as to the extent of its jurisdiction. Why, for example, should not men of God, including the Christ, have absolute competence to reveal to us the thoughts and will of God concerning us? This competence would be limited to religious things and not extended over profane things. This

is what we wish to say when we profess the sovereignty of the Scriptures in matters of religion.

I.—I fear this new distinction will not help you much. Have you reflected how fleeting and intangible is the assumed line of demarcation that you thus trace between religious and profane things; between those, for example, in which I ought to submit without discussion and those where my criticism may freely exercise itself? Who will trace this line with infallible authority? And if you fall back upon the individual sense, do you not see that everyone will put outside of the strictly religious domain all that his Christian conscience cannot tolerate? Had the orders of extermination given by God himself to Joshua and the conquerors of Palestine a religious character, or not? Are not the prescriptions of the Mosaic law all religious, and yet are we not obliged to make a choice among them?

I find not the slightest reason to believe that Jesus did not share the opinions of his contemporaries as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and as to the creation of the world and the origin of the human race, as narrated in Genesis. Do these opinions affect religion, or do they not? What shall we say of the person of Satan and of demoniac possession? Your distinction between religious and profane science does not help here; it is ineffective because it is false. The two domains are inseparable; not only are all truths interdependent, but the order of notions which you call profane, I don't know why, always and everywhere serves as the expression or the integument of what you call religious beliefs.

Adelphi.—In every order of knowledge authority has its function—that of testimony itself. In mathematics, where testimony has no place, authority has none. In history, where almost everything rests upon testimony, the part of authority is considerable. Will you not grant me that the authority of a witness is proportioned to his right to be believed? Does not the holiness of Christ give absolute authority to his testimony in the things of God?

I.—You have raised the question of historic testimony and its authority. We will examine that presently. But first let me set aside this last method of establishing doctrinal authority, by basing it upon the holiness of Christ. It is not worth more than the others, and I think I have already refuted it. I have shown that the utterances of Jesus being known to us only by apostolic tradition, nothing can guarantee to us that tradition has preserved the entire thought of the Saviour, or always with the meaning which it had upon his lips for those who heard him, and which was determined by the occasion. Besides, though holiness incontestably purifies a man's inward eye and renders the operations of his mind more accurate, it is no less certain, as nearly all conservative theologians admit, that it did not raise Christ above the sphere of human fallibility; it did not prevent his inheriting the religious conceptions and traditions of his people, so far as these did not run counter to his personal religious inspiration. Many an error may be due to sin. But error, so far as it is an intellectual act or a mental condition, is not a sin. Therefore, neither in fact nor in theory is it right or possible to postulate the absolute infallibility of the sayings of Jesus in the historic form in which we possess them. Are we at last agreed on this point? And are we finally rid of those incongruous and contradictory ideas, relative authority and limited infallibility?

Adelphi.—Yes, from the formal view-point of religious knowledge and the question of method; no, from the material view-point of the facts which constitute the revelation of God and the historic testimony which attests it. It seems to me that the latter is still an authority, so far as it partakes of the divinity of its contents. The Bible, the history of revelation, is invested for us with the authority of revelation, unless the latter has no reality. Let me explain myself.

The Christian religion is not a philosophy, nor even a purely subjective religious inspiration. It is a well defined historic fact, and consequently objective and resistant, on which our faith may and ought to rest. Otherwise it floats in the air, and becomes a fanciful dream. You

dread the fanaticism of the *illuminati;* there is no other help for it except history and tradition. Recall to mind the admirable theory of Rothe. He distinguishes in revelation two classes: the words of God in the consciousness of men of God, or *inspiration*, and acts of God in the history of humanity, or *history of God.* Without the first element acts are mute and dead; without the second inspiration is purely subjective and without purpose. The two interpenetrate and form a living organism, like the soul and the body. The body may be infirm, sickly, made of earthly clay, but it is still a living body and not a corpse. So with the Bible; it is alive by the spirit which fills it, and, like all living bodies, it exercises an undeniable action.

I.—Your words are golden, and I shall certainly not contradict opinions which are my own. Yes, religious inspiration has for correlative a religious purpose in nature and in history. The Christian religion is a historic fact, and the divine revelation given to man is the history of the acts of God, by which God carries on his work of educating and redeeming humanity. Every religious belief has as its inevitable consequence an interpretation of the religious history of humanity. The attentive study and meditation of this history are absolutely necessary to foster, strengthen, and enlighten the religious sense, if it is not to wander astray in the bypaths of illuminism. For what other reason have I almost continually confined myself to the critical study of this history, and formed all my religious philosophy from the point of view of history and psychology? I like, too, to hear you speak of the Bible as a living organism, having a soul and a body, and to see you proportioning its authority to its effects. But by so doing you yourself recognise differences in it. In the presence of texts which produce no effect, or which might even prove dangerous if the letter were blindly followed, you say that the authority of the Bible is of no force. Where its influence is of slight importance you esteem its authority small; where it is convincing, luminous, regenerating, and sanctifying, you attribute to it even divine authority. But where do you find the criterion by which

you establish these degrees and justify these differences? Is it not in your Christian consciousness, illuminated by the light of the Spirit? There is a diamond in this book, a life-draught in this vase of clay. But you do not value the case equally with the jewel, nor the clay as the liquor. You admit that the most imperfect, the most rudimentary human testimony may bring us a message from God, and teach us to recognise it as such by the response which it awakes in our hearts.

Adelphi.—I grant you all that; but there are acts which reveal God and continue to reveal him, independently of the effect which they produce upon us.

I.—Patience! I am coming to that. But let us take up the questions in order and close each one upon which we agree before opening another.

You speak of acts of God which constitute his objective revelation. I admit them quite as much as you or Rothe himself. No man can have felt the presence and action of God in his heart without finding traces of his presence active in all the universe. But let us state the question in all its amplitude, that we may see it as it is. God works and acts in nature. Jesus has taught us to see behind all phenomena and their laws the constant activity of a Father. The thought of God in nature is mysterious, often disconcerting. Yet our faith clings to it. There is in it a revelation of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God," said the psalmist of Israel. We say it too, but observe that we say it otherwise—I mean with another view of the physical universe. Modern astronomy has subjected to criticism the Psalmist's notions about the heavens and their hosts, and has dissipated them as so many childish imaginations. But do the heavens which it has discovered to us, the constitutions and courses of the worlds which it describes for us, give the religious man a smaller idea of the Creator's power?

From nature let us pass to the history of humanity, and in particular to that of religions. Here again, what a revolution has historical criticism not made! Are we not constrained to recognise a positive activity,

a history of God, in what we used to call paganism? Has he ceased to give everywhere witnesses of his presence and inspirations of the truth? Do we not discover them in the religions of China, of India, of Babylon, in the moral achievement of Greece and Rome? In short, the criticism of the documents reconstructs the history of humanity, till now almost unknown, and in this history the pious man recognises and hails the pedagogic work of his God.

This divine revelation becomes more exalted, more definite, stronger, and clearer in the history of the Hebrew people, in the life of Christ, of his apostles, and of all Christendom. You say that here we have a special revelation, and I do not doubt it—miraculous, I grant this also, since every act of God is miraculous to faith. But I add that the events of this history, like those of all the others, have been historically and psychologically conditioned, and for that very reason they are intelligible, they form a chain and are material for science. But this history of Israel and of the origins of Christianity ought to be studied and criticised like all the others, if we would know them historically. Otherwise we run the risk of taking the shadow, the legend, for the reality. We must then weigh testimonies, fix the age and value of the documents, work out an exegesis of them at once historical and grammatical. And we may arrive at a conception of this history entirely different from that held by the Church Fathers, without finding the work of God to be less striking and worthy of admiration.

In vain do we stiffen ourselves against this method and determine *a priori* to maintain the absolute historicity of the traditions found in Genesis; our obstinacy will not change the fact that the anonymous account which we possess is later by several thousands of years than the events it narrates. Likewise the criticism of the Pentateuch constrains us to modify seriously our ideas of the legislation of Sinai and the desert. In other words, we do not cease to see the revealing activity of God in the history of Israel, but we understand it differently.

So with the life of Jesus Christ and of his apostles. Here the docu-

ments are more numerous and positive. The reality of the events is easier to grasp, and free from other material. But we cannot deny that legend and theological speculation are mingled with them in the traditional history which has come down to us. Here again historic criticism has its work to do and ought to do it in full liberty.

Adelphi.—It is precisely the dissolving action of this criticism that alarms me. How can you reconcile the unlimited exercise of your criticism with the existence of a positive and well-defined Christianity?

I.—Here indeed we come to the last question, and the decisive one. Let us study it at leisure. By it two things, criticism and the Christian religion, are confronted with one another. Let us see how they behave toward one another.

With regard to historic criticism I maintain that its rights are illimitable, but that its power is not. You grant me these two propositions?

Adelphi.—I cannot dispute the first, for I do not see where can be the authority which could limit the rights of criticism. To limit the right of inquiry amounts to the same as denying it. I see that very clearly. Your second assertion is less clear to me. If the rights of criticism are unlimited, why should not its power be so? It seems to me that with the ability to question everything it can destroy everything.

I.—The conclusion is not imperative. What is historic criticism concerned with? With the very reality of the events of the past? No, simply with the subjective representation of them that we make for ourselves. It cannot modify the facts themselves, which remain what they always were; what it modifies is our idea or knowledge of them. Do not fear, then, that criticism will banish history; it has no other purpose or power than to make it known to us more certainly and accurately. The notion of a purely negative criticism is nonsense, criticism being considered as a whole work, and not in some special detail. In reality it never leaves the mind vacant, nor the past empty; at most it substitutes

for one idea of things past another which it believes to be more correct. No doubt it is often mistaken; but precisely by virtue of the object it pursues, it profits by its errors and turns its disproved hypotheses to the advantage of the truth. The dumb resistance which historic reality offers to its fancies and provisional conclusions warns it that it has not seen the whole and must begin its work over again. We should not draw from this a reason for shutting it up to scepticism. Incontestable results have been obtained in the amendment of the texts, the relative chronology of documents, and in the historical and grammatical explanation of passages formerly misunderstood.

In showing a legend to be such, destroying a prejudice, demonstrating the uncertainty of something which in fact is uncertain, that is to say, in making evident to us where our knowledge ends and our ignorance begins, it is continually instructing us, and efficaciously serves the cause of positive history. Is it not true that, thanks to criticism, we know the history of Greece and Rome, of Egypt and India, of Islam and Buddhism, of ancient Chaldea and of our Middle Ages better than they were known in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries? Likewise I don't hesitate to say that we have a more positive knowledge of the history of the Israelitish people, of the life of Jesus and of the apostolate than the Fathers of the Church and the Reformers had. To sum up, God has confided to men and to human witnesses the preaching and preservation of the gospel of salvation. If its testimony is subject to changes; to inconsistencies, obscurities which sometimes compromise it, he has given us the faculty of discernment, and at the proper time he has raised up the science of historic criticism which progressively gives greater light, and counterbalances the inevitable weaknesses of the human mind by establishing its equilibrium. You should therefore bless criticism, not ban it.

Adelphi.—I shall bless it when you have shown me how it can be saving Christianity when it seems to be destroying it.

I.—There is certainly a traditional notion of Christianity which is

incompatible with historic criticism; but it remains to be seen whether this is a correct notion and whether it does not need reforming. You have spoken of a "positive and determined Christianity" which it is important to maintain. Will you kindly tell me in what it consists, and what are its articles which we must believe under penalty of falling short of salvation?

Adelphi.—The thing is easier to understand than to state.

I.—That is no doubt the reason why everyone understands it as he likes and no one defines it. But if the Christian religion is indefinable except by the arbitrary decision of an ecclesiastical authority, may it not be that the general notion of it is inconsistent, and, to some degree, false? Catholicism presents me with a long list of articles to believe under peril of damnation. The list is not so long in the Anglican confession, still less in that of La Rochelle, and finally it is infinitely shortened in that of the Reformed Synod of 1872. Where shall I find an authentic and faithful statement of the articles which would constitute that positive Christianity of which I hear so much?

Adelphi.—In any case Churches and theologians agree that the Christian religion is inseparable from the historic life of Jesus Christ. Have you not said so yourself?

I.—And I say it again. But there is more than one way of connecting the Christian religion with the person and life of Christ. The Apostle Paul in his Epistles omits or ignores the entire life of the Master, his miraculous birth, his miracles, his teaching, and connects his gospel with a single fact, the death of Christ upon the cross. On the other hand, Athanasius and the Greek Church Fathers, inspired by St. John, concentrate all their teaching upon the fact of the birth, or the incarnation of the Word of God, who redeems, renews, and saves human nature, by identifying himself with it and so lifting it to the divine. Still farther, Socinians and rationalists find with St. James the saving word and the essence of the gospel only in the moral teachings of Jesus. Evidently none of these theologians is absolutely wrong, but neither is

any one of them exclusively right. The doctrine of the cross, the doctrine of the Incarnate Word, the moral teachings of the parables, and the Sermon on the Mount may all be traced back to a deeper principle of which these doctrines are so many different expressions. The death of Jesus was the blow which broke the alabaster box and set free the divine perfume of his heart, which was renunciation, sacrifice, love. The doctrine of the Word expresses that absolute union with God, that immanence of the Father in him, that sense of divine Sonship, which was the basis of his religious consciousness. And what are his discourses, if not the preaching of that gospel of love and forgiveness which was the outcome of his consciousness, and which made the salvation of sinners depend only upon repentance, trust, and the yielding up of the heart? In the religious consciousness of Jesus we find the initial divine fact, the creative fact, the seed from which the tree has grown.

Adelphi.—Does not the very fact of the existence of such a consciousness constitute a minimum, a historic residue which must be withdrawn from criticism? Who is to assure you that criticism will respect that any more than all the rest? In the last resort, you see, you are under the same banner with us.

I.—You would be right if I had said that the Christian religion consists in admitting the historic thesis that such a consciousness appeared in the world at a given date. Indeed you may admit this thesis and still not be a Christian. He who has made a critical demonstration of the fact has still to *believe*, to receive the gospel of salvation by faith alone, with repentance and the consecration of the heart. For the Christian faith is not a belief. Though it is never without an intellectual element, it is not an intellectual act. It is a moral act, having, like all moral acts, its sanction and sufficient warrant within itself. This is what believers call the witness of the Holy Spirit, which gives them their firm confidence. The *assurance* of faith is never founded on human authority or logical or historical demonstration; it must be, and it actually is, as Calvin says, drawn from a higher source; it comes from God himself.

Now this experimental faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, awakened in us by the most imperfect preaching, the most feeble testimony, humanly speaking, of the most ignorant of Christians, produces a religious consciousness identical with that of Jesus; it gives us a consciousness of inward reconciliation with God and of divine sonship. Thus the religious and moral consciousness of Jesus is repeated, continued, diffused, and remains actually present and living in each Christian generation, independently of criticism, which may peacefully continue its labours without the slightest risk of doing it harm. Faith thus understood has nothing to fear from historic criticism; it belongs to another order.[1]

At this capital point we find the parting of the ways between two conceptions of the Christian religion, two theologies. On one side is traditional theology, a more or less mitigated orthodoxy, representing a dualistic conception of Christianity; the gospel of salvation consisting in a series of historic or dogmatic beliefs, plus the living faith of the heart. Men are not saved by faith alone, but by faith and right beliefs, just as in Catholicism they are saved by faith and good works. Over against this dualistic, Catholic conception there is the monistic conception, organic, interior, of salvation by faith produced by the simple preaching of the gospel of Christ and sealed in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is the conception of Luther, of Calvin, of St. Paul, and, above all, it is the conception of the Master. This is the essential basis of the Christian religion, which, to be accepted, has need of no external authority as its warrant, whether that of a priest, or of a book, or of science. Science, book, ecclesiastical ministry, sacraments—to faith they are all means of grace, of which it makes use with thanks to God; but these means belong to faith, not faith to them. Do you not perceive how, the organic unity of the Christian religion being found, the entire system reconstructs itself in order, with the reciprocal subordination

[1] E. Ménégoz, "Reflexions sur l'Evangile du Salut," in "Publications diverses sur le Fidéisme," Paris, 1900.

of all its parts? At the same time, being inwardly enfranchised and set at peace, the Christian soul finds harmony in all its faculties, which till now were discordant. The intelligence no longer wars against the conscience, the reason against the will to believe, scientific activity against practical activity. All work together, in full liberty, with a sense of entire consecration to the work which God, by the activity of the Spirit, is carrying on in us and in the universe.

Adelphi.—You make your ideas most attractive. I see no theoretical objection to them. But I still find one, and a very grave one, in the practical order. If I understand you aright, you make the truth of the Christian religion to rest upon the experience of faith, that is to say, upon the religious life of the Christian. But how uncertain, inconstant, weak is this life, even among the most fervent! Are you not building upon the quicksand? If the Christian life were to be extinguished the Christian religion would vanish with it. You were but now expressing sympathy with the weak, the humble, the ignorant; are not you now condemning them to feed upon their own poverty, to lean upon their own weakness; and even we, in our hours of languor and spiritual death, have we not need of support and comfort?

I.—I am sorry to say that these last words prove to me that you have not grasped my thought. Where, pray, did you discern that I deprive Christians, whether strong or feeble, of the support, the succour, the means of grace, that the goodness of God has provided for them? The Church, preaching, the Bible, the communion of saints, the sacraments, the example and the love of the brethren, are not all these theirs, and is it not their right, or rather their duty, to make continual use of them? We are never without these stimulating influences, these means of education and uplift. But what is the object of the means of grace? It is to create, foster, strengthen in us the life of faith, not to take its place; to make us live, not to exempt us from living.

Have you not perceived the dangers of the system of authority? When religion is identified with faith in established authority, whether

Pope, council, Bible, or synod, if the authority becomes open to suspicion or is convinced of error on a single point, everything goes to pieces, and is overwhelmed in doubt. If, on the other hand, the sense of security is complete, the peril is not less to be dreaded. We have submitted to authority, and all is well. We are in the true Church, on the safe side; we may go to sleep.

Quite otherwise is it, I admit, with the religion of the Spirit. No doubt it also has its dangers; but it has its resources. Let me read you these admirable words of Mr. Leopold Monod, who felt your difficulties and met them with these words:[1] "After all, it is just (I would add that it is logical) that if my inner life grows sluggish, if comforts and self-esteem have usurped control over me, if indifference has benumbed and paralysed my conscience, it is just and right that I should lose my assurance, that I should feel myself tottering and not know which support to grasp. As soon as the support of the Spirit fails us, we seek for other supports. But there are no others; there ought to be none. We desire, as has been accurately said, *to believe without believing*, to possess a means of believing, a semblance of faith, in hours when the spiritual life declines and we believe no longer. Such a means does not exist; it must not exist. It must not be possible for us to imagine ourselves safe because we have taken shelter in correct beliefs or in practices of an official devotion. The just shall live by faith. And faith is an energy which takes hold on divine grace and makes it active in a human life dedicated to the service of God and the brethren. An authority which should absolve from faith by sanctioning a false confidence in belief would not be a gospel authority."[1]

This is perfectly true. When life is languishing and dying in indifference or in sin it avails not to resort to authority or criticism; we must betake ourselves to repentance and prayer. The gate is narrow which opens upon the way of life; if after passing through it we wander from that way, we can return to it only by entering again through the same door, for there is no other.

[1] L. Monod, "Le problème de l'autorité," 2d ed., p. 125.

As for the future of the Christian religion, why should we fear for it, if it is a work of God? Does it seem to you more fragile because it is a life rather than a belief? Please observe this: If the individual organism is above all things precarious, subject to accidents, to maladies, and death, on the other hand there is nothing in the world more persistent, more durable, more fruitful, than the power of life. Physiologists tell us that death itself is only one of its forms and functions. The smallest germ suffices to carry life where it never was before, and to rekindle it when it seemed extinct. We may cease to be its organs, but it will never be without organs, there will always be those to propagate it, for its all-powerful force is incessantly creating them. It is the fruit of the Spirit. But the Spirit never ceases its activity. It has been at work since the world began, it will continue to work until its end. External authorities have more than once changed in the history of Christianity; the Spirit abides. From generation to generation he has made it new. If Jesus were with us now, he would say, with that voice of his that always brings assurance to timid hearts: "Oh, men of little faith, all that has grown old and vanished with the religion of authority is empty wine-skins and worn-out forms. Suffer the religion of the Spirit to appear!"

A long silence followed. My friend and I remained in profound meditation, following, with a common emotion, the leadings of our individual thought. Each felt that we had exhausted the subject of our conversation. Adelphi, however, felt impelled to pursue it farther. He did so in the following words.

III

Why Has the Christian Religion Hitherto Taken On Authoritative Forms?

ADELPHI.—Permit me to go on to the end of my questioning. This is the last of it.

How do you explain the fact that all Christian Churches, in every age, have establishel within themselves some infallible dogmatic authority to guarantee the truth of their teaching? If the Christian religion has till now been kept alive only by such an organ, can you hope that it will continue to live after losing it?

I.—Consider this. You recognise that these infallible authorities have changed in the course of ages. In the time of Ignatius, infallibility, the organ of the truth, resided in the parochial bishop; in the time of Cyprian, in the entire episcopal body; Gerson and the Fathers of Basel and Constance found it in the council; they of the Vatican found it in the person of the Pope. Protestants rejected all these authorities, and in the eighteenth century substituted for them the letter of Scripture, and even in certain places their Confessions of Faith. We note, however, that certain communities, such as the Quakers, have managed perfectly well to do without any exterior authority of this kind. This being the case, how are we to maintain that Christianity is inseparable from authorities which may change and disappear without checking its progress in activity? Do you suppose that the same objection was not made to Luther—"By undermining the authority of tradition, which has reigned till now, you leave the Christian religion without support and exposed to destruction"? Has it been less alive or less fecund since then?

I might rest with these observations, but it is best to go to the root of the matter. This persistence of authoritative forms is a curious phenomenon in Christianity, which was proclaimed to the world as a religion of the Spirit, and which in fact is such by its essential principle. Is this phenomenon inexplicable?

I can explain it in two ways. The first is psychological. An innocent and natural delusion of popular faith in its first stage of development transfers the supernatural and divine character of its object to those organs by which the divine communicates itself or makes itself known. Thus among savage peoples the sorcerer is invested with

magical potency. Thus the sibyl is endowed with a supernatural power of sight. Thus the words of the Catholic priest for the people of his flock, and even those of the Protestant pastor for the ignorant among his people, become the very word of God. No otherwise have the Catholic Church and the Bible, both of them human organs of divine revelation, been endowed by Christian dogmatism with the privilege of infallibility, and many people cannot understand how this privilege can be so much as questioned by any but unbelievers. This is why all the religions of antiquity were religions of authority.

In the second place there is a historic reason. We find in the history of civilisations a law that the mental and social forms, ideas, and customs of earlier ages long persist, and project themselves into the higher civilisation which believes itself to have gone far beyond them. Nowhere are these survivals of the past more frequent than in the history of religions. For example, Christianity has replaced paganism and Judaism as a social and popular religion, at least in the Western world. But the older religions have not failed to take their reprisals. How often all along the history of the Church may we not discern them, scarcely disguised under Christian forms? Is not the Catholic notion of the Church essentially sacerdotal? Are not the relations of the individual to divinity subordinated to his relation to the priest, as in the ancient religions? Are not the very words the same in both cases, *sacerdos, pontifex?* In the Catholic hierarchy does not the Pope occupy the place and bear the name, "Sovereign Pontiff," *Pontifex Maximus*, which belonged to the official head of the Roman religion in the time of Augustus? Then, as now, the clergy formed a hierarchy and a caste, endowed with religious privileges which elevated them above the people. In both cases, regularity of priesthood is necessary to the efficacy of the *opus operatum*, to the distribution of the sacrament and the consummation of the sacrifice; for wherever there is a hierarchy and a priesthood there must be a sacrifice and an altar. You may carry this parallelism through the history of the constitution of the Catholic Church, its dogma, its

worship, the place given in it to the Virgin, to saints and angels and archangels, forming a series whose steps correspond to the heroes, demigods and goddesses of former days: will you dispute that in all this there has been a striking resurrection of that paganism which Roman Catholicism believes itself to have destroyed?

The same is also the case in Protestantism with what I may dare to call the superstition of the Bible, of the divine authority of the sacred letter. The dogma of verbal inspiration is not more original nor more new. It was long ago completely elaborated and established in the Judaism that preceded Jesus Christ. Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century were able to do nothing better than take up and revive the work of the Rabbins.

How, then, shall we maintain that these authoritative forms of Christianity were original with it, or are the results of its principle, when we see them insinuating themselves into it from without, and, having made themselves one with it, dragging it down to the level of the earlier religions which it believed itself to have abolished? It was impossible that the spiritual and entirely ideal principle of the gospel should in the very outset realise itself as a social and popular religion without being condemned to such an alloy by the very force of things. Forms of authority were a necessity to it. It would be as unreasonable to be scandalised because they temporarily prevailed as it would be to declare them eternal. The truth is that through the Christian ages they have never been in definitive and peaceful possession. There has always been a struggle between the true Christian spirit and that ponderous inheritance of the past which, however, has never been able quite to overpower it. It has at last triumphantly shaken off the incubus, and to it the future is promised. But now it is like the captive bird which sees its cage falling to pieces around it. It has long been imprisoned, but now it is singing over the fragments, conscious of its wings and of liberty to use them. We may call the two completed periods in the history of the Christian religion the pagan and the Jewish periods; the truly Christian

period is about to begin. The religion of the priesthood and the religion of the letter are outworn and dying before our eyes, making way for the religion of the Spirit.

Adelphi.—You are continually repeating that expression. Can you define a little more clearly what you understand by the religion of the Spirit?

I.—It gives me far more pleasure to reply than you to ask. Be assured that I no more invented the expression than the thing. It belongs to the Apostle Paul, who first opposed the ministry of the Spirit to that of the letter, thus strongly characterising the old and the new covenants by their principles of action. He immediately added, "The letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive." In this antithesis Paul's thought is very clearly evident. The letter, the alphabetic sign, characterises the Mosaic religion according to the form of its historic appearance, its mode of being and action. Written upon the stone, the Commandment of God remains exterior to man, both as an order and a menace; it enters into conflict with the carnal will, provokes it to transgression; engenders the consciousness of sin, that, is, of condemnation and of death. The letter kills. The Spirit characterises the religion of the Gospel, according to the very nature of the inward and moral relation which it establishes between God and man, according to the mode of being of the gospel and the principle of its action. The religious relation between the Christian and his Father is no longer ruled by a written letter, fixed and dead, but by a living inspiration, which gives strength to do the will of God in the very act of revealing it. The Spirit is life, because it is the creative power itself; it saves the sinner, regenerates him, makes him live.

This being the case, it seems to me that you should understand what is the religion of the Spirit. It is the religious relation realised in pure spirituality. It is God and man both conceived under the category of the spirit, mutually interpenetrating and thus arriving at full communion. By definition bodies are mutually impenetrable, in the sense that two cannot occupy the same place; they can be individualised only

by being isolated and opposed to one another, nor can they be in harmony except as they reach an equilibrium by balancing themselves one against the other. Entirely otherwise are the relations of spirits. Their essential tendency is to live a mutual life, to come together in a higher common life. What the law of gravitation is for maintaining harmony in the physical world, that love is, and so it works in the spiritual and moral world. Love is the vital force of spirits. By going out of themselves, sharing themselves, giving themselves, they realise their individuality, in the very act of entering into union with one another. The religion of the Spirit is the religion of love.

As the ultimate power of moral development in the human being, the Spirit of God brings to it no constraint from without; it determines and animates it from within, and thus maintains its life. Thenceforth there is no dualism between human morality and the higher angelic life. The performance of natural duties, the regular exercise of all human faculties, the progress of culture as of righteousness, these make the perfection of the Christian life. When the Christian religion becomes an inward reality, a fact of consciousness, it is nothing other than consciousness raised to its highest power. The religious ideal and the human ideal, the Kingdom of God and the highest good, are identical. Those oppositions have vanished which gave birth to conflicts and servitudes. The religion of the Spirit is the religion of liberty.

In the degree in which God, by his Spirit, lives and works in us, we live and work in him; we come out of our natural egotism, we are evermore perfectly set free from the bondage of the flesh and of sin. To be set free from evil is to be consecrated to God. The religion of the Spirit is the religion of holiness.

To aspire after this spiritual religion is therefore not to devise a new religion, but to return to the true Christian principle. It is to grasp the primitive gospel in its reality, to follow the Reformers in clearing it of all human additions, so restoring its true strength. The principle of the Reformation abides permanently in the Church. What-

ever may be the importance of the event of the sixteenth century, the Reformation is something still to be done, something to be perpetually done anew, something for which Luther and Calvin simply made ready a fair field.[1] You recognise the words of Vinet, the great prophet of the religion of the Spirit in our age and country. I give you another utterance of his by way of closing this long conversation. "Protestantism is for me only the starting point; my religion is beyond. I may, as a Protestant, hold some Catholic opinions, and who knows that I do not? *That which I absolutely repudiate is authority.*" The time has come, it seems to me, for those who have broken with authority in their inner life to break definitely with it in their theology.

Adelphi.—Thank you. I dare not say that you have silenced all my doubts or done away with all my scruples. But I understand your purpose better, and I no longer feel free to judge it. I would wish to be initiated into the religion and theology of the Spirit. Send me the conclusion of your work as soon as you can; then we will take up the subject again. Adieu.

CHAPTER II

JESUS CHRIST THE FOUNDER OF THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

I

The Teaching of Jesus; its Form

The gospel, in its very principle, implied the abrogation of religions of authority, and inaugurated as a fact the religion of the Spirit. The religious relation which it instituted between God and man was not determined by the necessary mediation of a priest, nor by the obligatory

[1] Vinet, "Littérat. au XIXme siècle," iii. v. 392.

letter of a law, but by the inner bond of love, by the consciousness of a filial relation between child and father. Thus the centre of gravity of the religious life was changed from without to within, from the institution to the conscience. The institution was not by that act abolished, but it became an accessory; it no longer appeared to be indispensable, and was doomed to be modified or to pass away as soon as it was seen to be useless, or inimical to true piety.

Jesus was entirely aware of the revolution which he was setting in operation. Of all his utterances there is not one which is farther removed from the mode of thought of his time, and consequently more authentic than this: "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant." And again, in another connection, but in the closest relations with the first declaration: "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your teacher and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth, for but one is your Father, even he who is in heaven." Jesus was not considering merely names and titles whose use is regulated by the sense in which they are employed. He was attacking and condemning the very principle of a religious hierarchy, which in the earlier religions had divided men into two classes, putting the consciences of one class under the tutelage of the other. What he proclaimed was fraternal equality, the spiritual independence of Christians, founded upon their filial relation to the heavenly father.[1]

It is true that in the same discourse Christ insists upon his own unique and entirely special function of religious teacher, his teachings and his person being the means by which his disciples are led into this personal, direct filial communion with the Father. Under this head he is entitled to and possesses a real authority. What is the nature of this authority, and how he exercises it, is what we have now to learn.

Let us take as our starting point the reflection by which the first Evangelist closes the Sermon on the Mount: "The multitudes were

[1] Appendix LXXXVI.

astonished at his teaching; for he taught as one having authority, and not as their scribes." We gain a true idea of the contrast between Jesus and the scribes established by this text, when we become clearly aware of the difference between teaching as having authority, and teaching by authority. The scribes who sat " in Moses' seat " spoke by authority. Their minute and severe orthodoxy was invested with the resolute objectivity and infallibility of a sacred text. But in the souls both of those who taught and those who heard it was lacking in that special sanction which the human conscience gives to truth, and which the truth must have if it is to appear divine, and take entire possession of us. This is why a teaching by authority is without real power and without authority.

Jesus, on the other hand, invoked no external sanction; he not only did not shelter himself behind the authority of Moses, but he felt no scruple nor embarrassment in taking exception to the venerated law of the scribes and Pharisees, correcting and completing it with a freedom which often brought upon him the accusation of heresy and blasphemy. In the Sermon on the Mount he did not once appeal to miracles; if at other times he refers to his works of healing it is only by way of warning, to awaken the attention and the consciences of his hearers, never to justify a doctrine which would not find its highest sanction in the voluntary adherence of the conscience. He steadfastly refused to perform any miracle to overcome the incredulity of those who argued with him, and always fell back upon this as the only decisive argument: " If any man wills to do the will of the Father, he will know of my teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." It is before all else the virtue, the efficacy of his word which gives it authority. His teaching forces itself upon souls because it takes hold of them and subjugates them as the truth itself does when it shows itself in its own luminous evidence—as holiness and love do when, mingling in one, they reveal themselves by the power of their own radiance. Doubtless every sentence of Jesus has revealing power; we may call it a ray from heaven if

we will, but conscience welcomes and embraces it as a light essentially its own. Thus his words so incorporate themselves in the conscience that it can neither forget nor repudiate them without repudiating itself.

Test this statement by different parts of the Sermon on the Mount. The human conscience may in a lower degree have responded to moral prescriptions which Jesus criticises, but once having heard the new voice, how shall it resist it or oppose its utterances? Must it not forever accept the Master's teachings about the true brotherly love, the purity of the inward eye, the beginning of sin in lust, the love of enemies, the forgiveness of offences, secret prayer, true piety? This being so, do you not understand the assurance and the sovereign authority with which Jesus proclaims the new law and preaches his gospel, opposes his dictum to that of the elders and even to that of Moses? In his consciousness reigned such a divine illumination, so profound and calm an assurance, so clear a perception, that all upright souls would equally and at once recognise "the word of God" which he had within himself, so that he could feel no hesitation or doubt; to himself and to others he could say: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." For in fact moral truth is for the conscience as strong and eternal as God himself.[1]

Therefore, Jesus was not concerned to display his miraculous gifts and vouchers to support the truth of his gospel, but rather preached the gospel in order to awaken souls subdued and touched to some conception of the dignity of his person and the greatness of his work. He does not command belief; he creates and inspires confidence, which is something entirely different. Instead of terrorising and stupefying the mind he wakens it and stimulates it to activity. How often he bewails the slowness and dulness of apprehension of which his hearers and his disciples give evidence! He uses the method of parables to no other end. His parables are sealed to inert or ill-disposed consciences, but they fly

[1] The apostle Paul expresses the same assurance, the same kind of moral invincibility, in Gal. i. 6-9. Luther, also, in many places.

open like rich treasure-houses to those who thirst for righteousness and eternal life, the best goods of the Kingdom of Heaven. "He that asketh receiveth, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocks it shall be opened." Above all, he seeks to awake the needs that he desires to satisfy. "Blessed are the poor!"—to create the hunger and thirst that he intends to fill: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst!"—to incite to a search which he will change into possession. The spiritual life is not a state, it is an aspiration, a desire, a prayer, an act. Hence the profound and most accurate meaning of those paradoxical sayings which self-satisfied devotees, the Pharisees of all periods, can never understand: "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. Take heed how ye hear; he that hath ears to hear, let him hear; with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you." [1]

Jesus' method of teaching is then the opposite of that of the scribes, that is, the method of authority. It is rather a sort of divine maieutic, tending to give birth to a new life in the heart, to create the spiritual man in the carnal and animal man.[2]

To such a purpose every method of authority would have been unequal and contradictory. The words of Jesus do not find their end in themselves—they are only means. This is why they are so free, so suited to the occasion, so paradoxical, so foreign and rebellious to any systematic order.

Purposing above all things to arouse his hearers to religious and moral activity, the Master always places himself in the circle of ideas in which they live, reasons according to their logic, willingly uses arguments *ad hominem*, clothes his thought in images and even in enigmas, sharpens all his words to a point which can penetrate the hardened heart, disturb the satisfied devotee, rouse inattentive souls. Being subject to no authority except that of God, they are absolutely unfit to serve as a fulcrum for a new religion of authority. To undertake, from a super-

[1] Matt. vii. 6-8; Mark iv. 24, 25. [2] Matt. xviii. 3, xix. 14; John iii. 3-8.

stitious notion of piety, to reduce them to dogmatic formulas is to show a lack of comprehension of their spirit, their purpose, and their value.

The authority of Jesus is the authority of the things that he teaches, the divine work which he carries on in the hearts of men. It is the authority of his person, if we will, so far as his person is the incarnation of his gospel, and as both are clothed with the ascendency of holiness and the conquering charm of love. He proposes to men the divine verities which were revealed to him in his consciousness, and by proposing he imposes them, or rather, they impose themselves by their own virtue. By an all-powerful moral contagion he communicates to others the divine life which is in himself. He believes in the spiritual vocation of the human soul, in its affinity with the divine; he has only to put it in contact with truth and life and it receives both as intrinsic to itself.

His word is like a seed scattered with full hands in the confidence that it will never fall upon good ground without taking root and multiplying indefinitely. His authority over the conscience is of the same nature as that of God,—inward, moral,—and, by that very fact, sovereign; it is the authority not of the letter which oppresses and kills, but of the Spirit which makes alive.[1]

II

Jesus and the Old Testament

The scribes one day brought before Jesus the question of authority. "By what authority," they asked him, "doest thou these things?" The Master replied by another question: "The baptism of John; was it from heaven or of men?" This was according to his custom to transfer the debate from the field of scholasticism to that of conscience; to invoke the witness of the latter rather than that of an officially delegated or exterior authority. He might have appealed to Scripture to arbitrate between himself and his adversaries. Why did he not do so?

As a matter of fact, his attitude toward the law and the prophets

[1] Appendix LXXXVII.

was entirely different from that of the Pharisees, and he was still less in accord with them as to the proper way of reading the Scriptures than as to the conclusions to be drawn from them.

The attitude of Jesus in this regard was twofold. On one hand, he recognised in Judaism a divine dispensation, the religion of the true God, and consequently given by God. His religious consciousness was not only rooted in this age-long tradition, it lived in it and drew from it unceasing edification. Jesus was ever in intimate and familiar communion with the patriarchs, the prophets, and all the " men of God " who had preceded him. So with regard to the Scriptures which made him acquainted with them. He never concerns himself with such historic and literary questions as might arise from the character of the sacred collection. He finds in it the Spirit of the Father, his own animating Spirit, and consequently it is to him " the Word of God." We must therefore not be too much surprised when, from his purely religious and moral standpoint, he undertakes to show how he values the Law and the Prophets by protesting that he proposes not to abolish, but to fulfil them, even adding that " till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." [1]

Yet it is no less evident that here as elsewhere he uses Scripture in sovereign liberty. He always instinctively goes straight to the moral and religious element of the sacred books, and takes account of nothing else. The starting point of his exegesis is therefore essentially different from that of the literal legalism of the rabbis or the allegorical method of Philo and the Gnostics. By an elective affinity, the more unerring because anterior to all reasoning, his consciousness assimilates all that is homogeneous to it, and by that act transforms it into something apparently both old and new, most conservative and most revolutionary. Jesus never quotes a text as of authority because it is a part of Holy Scripture, but always as having authority in itself, by virtue of the sentiment it expresses. Unhesitatingly and without compunction, there-

[1] Matt. v. 17, 18.

fore, he sets aside all such as contradict his own inward experience, and emphasises those which confirm and sanction it. To the prescriptions of Leviticus he opposes the prophetic word, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." He cites the example of David and of the priests themselves against the rigour of Pharisaic jurisprudence concerning the Sabbath. When the authorisation of divorce accorded by Moses is brought before him, he sets it aside as a concession to hardness of heart.[1] Thus the law seems to lose all its arbitrary precepts. He sums it up in two commandments, love of God and of the neighbour. He sets this moral substance apart from all the rest, and shows all the rest to be fulfilled in it.

The Pharisees made no mistake as to the outcome of this method. They accused Jesus of being a transgressor of the law, a despiser of Moses, an enemy of the temple and the established religion; and in truth he did deduce an entirely new religion from the old; out of its legal forms of righteousness he drew an entirely new principle of righteousness, from its narrow morals a higher morality; and if it was his purpose to destroy only by fulfilling, his fulfilment was in fact nothing less than a radical destruction.

It is easy to concede to Jesus the liberty of which he gives proof with respect to ancient Scriptures and traditional institutions. But do his disciples share it? Was it not an exceptional, divine prerogative, reserved to the Messiah, as the founder of the new covenant? So to judge would be to show an entire want of apprehension of the method of Jesus, and the critical principle by virtue of which he carried on and completed his reforming work.

It has already been said that his religious consciousness, by a secret affinity, an infallible inspiration, seized upon the moral substance, the purely religious element of the Law and the Prophets, and actually disengaged from it the germ of a new religion, a worship in spirit and in truth, letting all the rest fall away like dead leaves. But further, the constant effort of Jesus in the training of his disciples was to create in them a moral consciousness identical with his own, and by this means to

[1] Matt. ix. 13, xii. 3-5, xix. 3-9.

put them in a condition to carry on his work of criticism, to pursue his task of distinguishing between that which is eternal and that which is perishable in the Old Testament. Jesus did not employ a didactic process in this work. He laid down its principles, applying them, by way of example, to a few particular cases, such as the Sabbath, fasting, food, not to limit the reformation, but to introduce it, to reveal its spirit, and open the way for its further progress.

Therefore he authoritatively abrogated nothing; he justified to the consciences of the least of his disciples the abrogations which he pronounced; he wanted them to understand what he was doing, and to this end he always put in the clearest light the general principle which inspired his acts. But this principle was drawn, not from heaven nor from any supernatural authority, but from the very depths of the human consciousness, so that, once it was proclaimed, conscience must recognise it as its own, and could not let it go.

There are abundant examples of his method. One day the Pharisees are scandalised at seeing Jesus receiving and eating with publicans and people of bad reputation, and Jesus replies, "Mercy is of more value than sacrifice; go ye and learn what that means, and then you will understand why the physician goes to them who are sick and not to them who are well." [1] Setting aside the obligation to fast, he refers to the popular experience that it is not well to sew a piece of new cloth (the gospel) upon an old garment (the old religion of outward practices). Discussions concerning the Sabbath lead up to two general theses: "The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath," and "It is lawful [and therefore obligatory] to do good on the Sabbath day" as on other days. Especially noteworthy is his condemnation of the *Korban* of the Pharisees, which absolved a son from duty to father and mother on the pretext that he had offered to God, that is, to the temple, the equivalent of what he ought to have given them. As to clean and unclean meats, and legal uncleannesses, what a radical overturning of Jewish ideas of devotion lies in the one reflection that nothing that enters a man can

[1] Matt. ix. 10-13; Luke v. 29-32.

soil him *morally*, but only that which proceeds from his heart![1] What else is this than the verdict of the conscience upon a form of religion beyond which it has passed? Thus it is perfectly evident that Jesus liberated his disciples' consciences equally with his own. The Apostle Paul was true to his spirit when he brought out the distinction and showed the radical opposition between the Law and the Gospel. Christ did not bring in new mysteries, new precepts; he created a new state of soul. His revelation is not superimposed upon the conscience, like that of Moses; it is realised in the conscience itself; it is the conscience raised to a higher power of clear sight and energy.

Whether it would or no the Church was forced to walk in the way he opened, and break with the letter of the Old Testament, under penalty of being unfaithful to the spirit of the New. In vain did it fall back upon allegory, typology, all the subtleties of scholasticism to veil the rupture and preserve intact the authority of the antiquated letter. Those only deceive themselves who still believe that such expedients support the infallibility of Scripture. What, indeed, is this avowed necessity of allegorically interpreting the text, if not the tacit admission that the text in its true and historic sense has become foreign or hostile to the Christian consciousness?

III

The Person of Jesus Christ; Its Authority

There are those who will say, we admit, that the Old Testament revelation, being preparatory, cannot be of absolute authority for Christians; but does not some such authority logically inhere in the revelation brought by Jesus Christ himself and by him declared to be definitive and perfect? Unless indeed his revelation is of such a nature as to exclude for itself, as it abrogates for all others, all external authority.

It is certain that Jesus sovereignly conquers hearts. When by

[1] Matt. xii. 1-12; Mark ii. 27, iii. 2-4; Luke vi. 9; Mark vii. 9-13; Matt. xv. 10-20.

whatever means, a word or an act of healing, men get a glimpse of the treasure of life which he bears in himself, the most simple or the most learned, Rabbi Nicodemus or the Canaanite woman, is joined to him in a bond of love and confidence which nothing can break. This influence of the person of Jesus continues to be exerted by the intermediary of his discourses, and especially of his death upon the cross; he conquers us by his spirit and at once becomes our Master, the freely elected Master of our souls. This is the primary meaning, the moral and religious meaning, of the word κύριος, Lord. What is the nature of this sovereignty? In what sense is the person of Christ the object of the faith and love of Christians?

The personal authority of Christ does not in the least degree coincide, nor can it be identified, with that of his discourses, considered abstractly as the expression of a doctrine; still less with the traditional historic form in which they have been preserved. His authority is not that of any letter whatsoever; it arises from the outshining of the inner consciousness of Jesus, a radiation of holiness, of love, of the presence of God within him. The mysterious power which in his consciousness and by his word subjugates our souls and makes them his is the authority of God himself, it is the spirit of truth, of love, and of holiness. In this sense it must be said that so soon as this authority reveals itself to us we also feel it to be sovereign and absolute. This consciousness of Jesus realises and includes for us the spiritual and moral bond between the human soul and God, their absolute union, so that when this consciousness becomes ours we feel ourselves to be in the perfect religion, in normal and eternal relations with God. This is why we cannot separate ourselves from this consciousness of Christ, which is the essence and the religious dignity of his person. In the last analysis, and to go down to the very root of the Christian religion, to be a Christian is not to acquire a notion of God, or even an abstract doctrine of his paternal love; it is to live over, within ourselves, the inner, spiritual life of Christ, and by the union of our heart with his to *feel* in ourselves the

presence of a Father and the reality of our filial relation to him, just as Christ felt in himself the Father's presence and his filial relation to him. It is not a question of a new teaching, but of a transformed consciousness. Christ is far more than the highest authority in Christianity; he is Christianity itself.

The true and ultimate object of faith in Jesus Christ is therefore not the man Jesus, but the revelation of the Father which is in him. *Jesusolatry*, that is, the separate worship of the man Jesus, is, so far as the Christian religion is concerned, as truly an idolatry as the adoration of the Virgin and the saints. It is as repugnant to Protestant piety in its deep instinctive tendency as to the primitive gospel. Jesus never claimed worship for himself.

To maintain in all its plenitude the authority of Christ it is therefore important not to displace its seat, its true centre. It is sovereign and absolute, as that of God himself, in the domain of the religious experience to which by its own action it gives rise in us. This experience is threefold: the experience of our deliverance from evil, of our filial union with the Father, and of our entrance into eternal life. All these were in the consciousness of Christ, and by our spiritual communion with him they pass into our own as an actual, living reality. But to extend the authority of Christ beyond this domain to things of another order and unrelated to it, to the body of general and traditional notions in which his mind was trained and which he shared with all his contemporaries, notions cosmographical, historical, and literary, demonology, possession, apocalyptic hopes,—this is to pervert the gospel, to put it into conflict with science and with criticism, to impute to Jesus purposes and pretensions which he never claimed,—in a word, to destroy his authority under the pretext of making it absolute. The religious and moral content of his consciousness may be recognised by this test: that it is perfectly assimilable by our own. The authority of Christ over us is perfect in the precise degree in which this assimilation has taken place. And thus, having first been a historic fact, it becomes an inward spir-

itual and moral power, acting upon the conscience as the ideal acts, and thus universally felt to be of imperative obligation and invincible attraction.

For himself, therefore, no less than for his disciples, Jesus repudiated all claim to external authority, and in return external authority, acting through tradition and the Jewish hierarchy, condemned him. For him that notion of an infallible outward authority, on which the scribes and Pharisees founded their religious system, simply did not exist. His gospel fundamentally disallowed it. In fact, where is the usefulness of oracular authority, when the question is not of imposing a belief or a line of conduct as necessary to salvation, but of relating salvation to the moral acts of trust, repentance, consecration to God? An entirely different sort of authority is needed in this case, the authority of holiness and love. With this authority Jesus was endowed, and he wills that his disciples shall also be clothed in it. This is not the authority of the letter, but of the Spirit. Paul meant nothing else when, comparing the two Covenants and the kind of authority exercised by each, he wrote: "The Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." [1]

IV

The Nature of the Gospel

No one denies that the personal religion of Christ was all of inspiration without exterior yoke; but it is added that such a religion can never be that of sinful men. The estate of sin into which they have fallen renders indispensable the discipline of a divinely ordered institution or code. Such an argument is fundamentally irrational. I do not deny that those external authorities which in the older religions oppressed the human conscience had their first cause in man's sinful state. But what is the gospel, and what is its purpose, if not to bring about the blotting

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 17. Bengel, "Conversio fit ad Dominum ut Spiritum" (The authority of the Lord is that of the Spirit himself).

out of sin and the redemption of the sinner? How then can it find room and sanction for the authorities of former religions, when it does away with the very reason for their existence? Let us rather admit that the gospel is in itself the destruction of all servitudes, as well of legal and sacerdotal servitudes as of servitude of sin. When one is abolished all the others fall, as a matter of necessity. Paul admirably sets this forth in his figure of the prison in which sinful men are shut up, and of the jäiler who keeps them in ward. When the prison is opened the functions of the jailer cease.

We must here anticipate the misapprehension by which certain mystical anarchists [1] have drawn the conclusion that every social organisation and hierarchy has been abolished. There is no incompatibility between the nature of Christ's gospel and the existence of human institutions of relative value, justified and limited by the very services they render, such as the authority of the father, and of teachers of various degrees, in the upbringing of children, or such as that of apostles and evangelists who preach Christ's word, or of ecclesiastical and civil authorities regularly constituted with a view to the maintenance of order in the Church or the State. All these organisations are founded upon the duty of the strong to come to the aid of the weak. But such are purely auxiliary forces. They become contrary to the gospel when, being human, they take upon themselves divine attributes and by virtue of these attributes substitute themselves for the authority of God, and assume to be *mediators* between God and the human soul; whether a sacerdotal institution claiming to be divine, or a human letter giving itself out as the objective word of God. Mediations of such a kind become in fact obstacles and barriers which interrupt the direct communion between the Father and his child. What else than idols are human institutions, whether Church or book, when thus held to be divine? [2]

The essential characteristic of the gospel of Christ, that by which it marks a new epoch in the religious and moral development of humanity,

[1] Tolstoy, for example.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

is that it has made things that were formerly essential and of principal importance—priesthood, rite, exterior law—to be accessories; and on the other hand has raised those which were formerly derived and subordinate —heart piety and relations with God—to be things of final and capital importance, the very essence of religion. Thus the religious world has been reversed; all its relations have been inverted because its centre of gravity has been displaced. Never in all human history was there a more radical revolution and change.

In the consciousness of Christ the relation of man with God, the very principle of religion,—piety,—was determined entirely anew. There was nothing exterior in the bond between his consciousness and God. Wholly interior and moral, it was born of a profound sense of unity and love, like that which links the father and the child. The God who is in heaven revealed himself in the heart of Jesus as his Father; Jesus felt himself to be living in God as his Son. And we find in almost every word he uttered the proof that he proposed to create the same filial relation between his disciples and God, that this should be the distinctive mark and essential content of that piety with which he bent every effort to inspire them.

It is a mistake to think that Jesus introduced a new doctrine of God, his essence and attributes, and of the intra-divine life. His notion of God is that of the Old Testament. Even the idea of God as the Father is not new. The new thing here is the inward attitude. In the consciousness of Christ the God of Moses and the prophets reveals himself as in a new relation to human consciousness. This new relation, expressed by the word Father, is the principle and essence of the gospel revelation, which it would be better to call a creation. This is why on the lips of Jesus the word Father, already known, becomes the proper name of God. Jesus never invokes God by any other name: "Father, my Father."[1] But in this intimate and familiar association there is not a shadow of metaphysical monopoly or exclusive religious egotism.

[1] Mark xiv. 36; Matt. x. 32, xi. 27, xviii. 19, 35, etc.

When he revealed himself to Jesus as Father, God revealed himself as such to men in general. The love of the Father is bestowed upon all his children without a single exception, and if there is any preference it is in favour of the most insignificant, the poorest, the most fallen, the most orphaned.[1] Paternal love thus becomes the highest characteristic of the relations of God with men. So Christ teaches his disciples to pray as he does, to put themselves into the same filial relation with God, saying to him, "Our Father." So, too, in speaking to his disciples of God he more often says "your Father," or "our Father" than "my Father." They too must become the "children of the Father." And they will become such by learning to love as he does, without condition or reserve.[2] To the Apostle Paul the Christian's distinctive and specific invocation was "Abba! Father!" which was that of Christ.[3] In short, the perfect revelation is in the perfection of piety. We are Christians just so far as the personal piety of Jesus, the sense of divine sonship, is reproduced in us.

In this sort of piety is there any place for the duty of submission to the injunctions of any exterior authority soever?

What guide, what support, what strength did Jesus give to his disciples? Not one other than the Spirit of his Father, which abode in him and would abide in them. He promised it without a single exception to all who would ask the Father for it. He is the Spirit of the Father, and consequently a spirit of love, of holiness, of self-renunciation, of devotion to others. He should be the soul of their soul, the principle of their conduct, their guide and counsellor on their way through an inimical world. On solemn occasions he will suggest to them what they ought to say. He is the best gift which the Father can give to his children, a better bread than that which we give to our own. He is the permanent inward bond which unites the children to the Father and to one another, so forming an eternal family.[4]

[1] Matt. v. 45-48, vi. 1-8, x. 29, xxiii. 9; Mark xi. 25, etc. [2] Matt. v. 9, 45.
[3] Rom. viii. 14-17; Gal. iv. 1-7, iv. 21-v. 1; John viii. 35, etc.
[4] Luke xi. 13; Matt. vii. 7-11, x. 20; Luke xxiv. 49; John xiv. 26, xv. 26, etc.

Jesus Christ promised his disciples the help and guidance of the Spirit of God, in all circumstances, for all their needs, and in all that they should have to do or to suffer, but in no sense to constitute a new Scriptural code to which Christians would thenceforth be forever enslaved. How, then, came it to pass that the Church learned to distrust the Master's promise, and hastened to build up again that which he destroyed—the absolute authority of the so-called divine letter?

The Church was incredulous, and it still is so as regards the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. She has limited inspiration to bishops, the hierarchy, the Pope, or else to the authors whose writings are collected between the covers of the New Testament, and has denied it to ordinary Christians; and for them she has created a new authority, thus depriving them of the liberty which Christ conquered for every son of the Father.

The dogma which made the Holy Spirit a metaphysical entity paralysed and killed his dynamic influence in the Christian life. In the Old Testament and the New the Spirit represented the divine principle in the human soul, the immanent influence of the living God. Elevated into the empyrean of the Trinity it has become transcendent, not less apart from the world than the two other divine persons, and thus it too has need of a mediating organ by which to be revealed and made active; it has become incarnate and therefore localised either in the Catholic hierarchy or in the code of Scripture. Nothing could be farther from the thought or the promise of Jesus.

At the same time those Christians who claimed to be directly guided by the Spirit came to be held in suspicion. There was a disquieting mysticism about them. The Spirit could be permitted to act or to manifest himself only in legal and official ways. Having become a transcendent force, he appeared to be an undetermined principle. Those who invoked him as a shield for fanaticism were victims of delusion or at best they identified him with their own imaginings. The teaching of the Gospels is absolutely the contrary. It is impossible to conceive of a power historically more clearly defined than the Spirit which Jesus prom-

ised to his disciples. It is the Spirit of the Father, which was in himself, manifesting itself as a spirit of truth, of moral sincerity, of perfect justice and unreserved love for fellow men. To two of his disciples who desired to call down fire from heaven upon a village which was unwilling to receive their Master, Jesus declared that they did not know the manner of spirit which animated them. To the Pharisees who confused his spirit with that of Beelzebub he spoke of an unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. The Fourth Gospel, embodying the idea if not the words of his teaching, declares that the Spirit which the disciples of Jesus were to receive would be his Spirit, another himself, that is, the inspiration of all his words and of his whole life. By this Spirit Christ is forever present with his followers.[1]

Those who claim to speak in the name of the Holy Spirit may judge of the Christian character of their inspiration by its conformity with that of Christ. The true children of the Father are those who are led by the very Spirit of him in whom the Father is revealed. Thus there is nothing more specifically determined than that which is called the Spirit of God, manifested in Jesus Christ. Far from separating from Christ those who are truly imbued with and animated by it, far from giving them over to all sorts of chimeras, the Spirit forever attracts us to Christ, makes him live again in each Christian, rescues him from all that is imperfect and contingent in history, and makes him eternally present in consciousness.

The Spirit of Christ gives us to recognise the words of Christ as words of religious and moral truth, and therefore obligatory, and in their turn his words enable us to distinguish the true inspiration of Christ in all the successive and various religious manifestations that call themselves by his name. This is not a vicious circle; it is the circle of life, in which the religious consciousness awakes and is developed.

Christ was not only the prophet of the religion of the Spirit, he introduced it into the world and forever remains its Master.

[1] John xiv. 16-20, xv. 26, xvi. 13-15.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW TESTAMENT THE CHARTER OF THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

I

The Fulfilment of the Messianic Promise

In his noblest page Jeremiah thus prophesied: "The Word of Jehovah: behold the days come that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband to them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah; I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it, and I will be their God and they shall be my people."[1] It would be impossible more accurately to characterise the new covenant forever established between God and man in the consciousness of Jesus Christ. The divine law transferred from Sinai's tables of stone to tables of the heart, put into organic relations with the human conscience, so incorporating itself with it as henceforth to be identical with it; the heteronomy of the former time becoming autonomy, the moral ideal ceasing to be a commandment of despair and menace; the holiness of Jehovah reappearing in more august form as the love of the heavenly Father; the child's faith and trust becoming an inward light, an inward power, which renews the soul from within, exalting its energies and sanctifying the whole of life—this is the new gospel, the religion of the Spirit.

This is the character and this the aspect in which apostolic Christianity is shown in the New Testament, from its first page to its last.[2]

[1] Jer. xxxi. 31-33.

[2] The very expression, "New Testament, new covenant," καινὴ διαθηκὴ is taken from the passage in Jeremiah which is especially considered by Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 6.

The Christian life is there represented, not as obedience and submission to an external authority, but as the product of an inspiration, as the very creation of the Spirit of God or of Christ shed abroad in the hearts of believers.[1] Thenceforth they have in themselves the motive force and the rule of their thought and life.

We need be neither disconcerted nor distressed by the fantastic and sometimes morbid forms which Christianity took on in the early days of fervent enthusiasm. Uneducated and without the critical sense, the early Christians often prized the manifestations of the Spirit in proportion to their singularity. But among the charisms or gifts of the Spirit the Apostle Paul placed that which he called the gift of the discernment of the relative value of special inspirations, and while he counselled the Thessalonian Christians to " quench not the Spirit," he failed not to offer a judicious and profound criticism of those charisms which were most alluring and most pleasing to the popular taste; he established a strict gradation among these sometimes tumultuous manifestations, from the gift of tongues, which he put in the lowest rank, up to faith, hope, and that divine gift which he ranked above all the others, disinterested, patient, devoted love, without which all the rest is nothing. He always traces inspiration back to the normal imitation of Christ as its essential and regulating principle. They who are not animated by the Spirit of Christ are none of his.[2]

Thus the New Testament attests the universality of the gift of the Spirit, and maintains the privilege of all Christians, at all times and without exception, to share in it. By this fact it becomes the inalienable warrant of the spirituality of the gospel, and merits the name we give it, the charter of the religion of the Spirit. It is worth while to make this clearly evident.

The Book of Acts records the earliest fulfilment of the Messianic promise. In the effusion of the Spirit upon the entire community of

[1] John iii. 5-8; Rom. viii. 14, etc.

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 10: διάκρισις πνευμάτων. 1 Thess. v. 19, 20: τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε, προφητείας μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτε, πάντα δὲ δοκιμάζετε. Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. xii., xiii., xiv. *Cf.* 1 John iv. 1.

the disciples assembled at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, Luke recognised the distinctive token of the new time. No doubt the memory of the event had become blurred in the somewhat late tradition recovered by Luke. It is indeed an unintelligent misapprehension by which he changes the mystical and psychical phenomenon of glossolalia (flow of incoherent and often unintelligible words) which Paul well describes and judges in his first letter to the Corinthians, into a miraculous gift of speaking foreign languages. Yet the historic reality shines through the mists of legend. The mere fact that the inhabitants of Jerusalem who witnessed these extraordinary ebullitions of the disciples took them for drunken men proves that the phenomenon was of the same nature as that which took place in Corinth twenty years later, when the "glossolalists" were believed to be insane. Notwithstanding which, Luke's narrative leaves no room for doubt that this was a Messianic miracle, the miracle of inspiration bestowed at a given moment upon the whole body of this first Christian assembly.

Such is the meaning of Peter's discourse. He begins by setting aside the accusation of drunkenness with the remark that it was still early in the day. But he might quite as well have accepted it in a favourable sense, and made use of it as a speaking image. Yes, these men were intoxicated—with enthusiasm, with faith, hope, joy. The sweet wine of the new vintage had suddenly gone to their heads. They had lost their present timidity, and with it, temporarily, the equilibrium of their mental faculties; they had become prophets, *nabis*, in the ancient sense of the word. Each, according to his gifts and the relation of his feelings to his physical force, was expressing by shout and gesture, by song and broken quotations of Scripture, perhaps by dance and other postures, and celebrating as best he could the "wonderful works" of God.

Peter explains these prodigies by recalling the Messianic prophecy of Joel: "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall

prophesy." Thus the difference between the old and the new covenants is strongly marked, the difference between the age of the Law and that of the Messiah. The advent of the latter was announced by a general outpouring of the Spirit. The new nation was to be a nation of prophets. That which had been the privilege of a few has become the right of all. This is the universal inspiration of Christians.[1]

Another passage in the Book of Acts shows still more clearly that men become true and complete Christians only by experiencing the gift of the Spirit. There were at Ephesus certain disciples who had never heard of such a gift, nor even of the fact of the Spirit; they had received only the baptism of John. Paul baptised them into the name of the Lord Jesus, and immediately the Spirit fell upon them with all the extraordinary signs of his presence.[2]

A third incident of this first period of the history of the Christian Church is no less significant. Philip had evangelised Samaria with extraordinary success. Men and women had come to him for baptism. But, says the narrator, the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen upon them. The apostles in Jerusalem did not consider such a conversion as complete, even when it had been accompanied by baptism with water into the name of Jesus. That it might become so, they dispatched thither Peter and John, who prayed for these converts and laid their hands upon them, whereupon they received the Spirit.[3]

Precisely the opposite took place with Cornelius, the pious centurion. During the preaching of Peter, and under the influence of his words, the Spirit fell upon all his hearers, who began to speak in tongues and glorify God as the first disciples had done on the day of Pentecost. And Peter cried, " Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptised who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? " [4]

Is not this the place for recalling to mind the contrast which John the Baptist himself established between his baptism and the Messianic baptism of the new era: " I baptise you in water . . . but the one

[1] Acts ii. 1-20. [2] *Ib.*, xix. 1-7. [3] Acts viii. 12-17. [4] *Ib.*, x. 44-48.

that cometh after me is mightier than I; he shall baptise you with the Spirit and with fire." [1] The Spirit symbolised by fire is the power which is to renew the hearts of men.

The Church and theology have singularly fallen from this high position. Having reduced inspiration to the theory of intellectual infallibility, they have separated it from the Christian life, and have forgotten that the gift of the regenerating and enlightening Spirit is organically connected with the living faith of all Christians. Thus they have opened a chasm between the apostles, considered as endowed with an absolute and exceptional privilege, and all other believers, whom they thus deprive of that which Jesus and his disciples showed to be the characteristic of the new covenant, and thus relegate to the yoke of authority, as under the old covenant. In the beginning all the believers felt themselves to be inspired. It was the sign of their emancipation and their guaranty of liberty as children of God. Christendom must get back to the religion of the Spirit if it is not to lose its title of nobility and the image of its first ideal.

II

The Paulinian Notion of Inspiration

In the early days Christian inspiration gushed forth tumultuous and disturbing; it became clarified in Paul's Epistles. The apostle worked out a new and profound theory of the fact; he brought to light its essentially ethical principle, to which he clearly and vigorously subordinated all those external, marvellous, often morbid and dangerous forms which it might assume.

The idea of the Spirit is more than an important element in Paul's theology; it is the soul of the doctrine, the binding principle which makes all its parts coherent, from the idea of God who is Spirit, and Christ who is the Spirit manifested and active in the world, to that regeneration which is the fruit of the Spirit, and eternal life which is the

[1] Matt. iii. 11.

life of the Spirit.[1] Or to express it in other terms, it is a higher form of being, a specific category of thought, fixing the point of view from which the apostle carries on all his meditations and reasonings, co-ordinates and logically develops his entire conception of Christianity. The dominant feature of his dogmatic is to think or to know "according to the Spirit" (κατὰ πνεῦμα); his entire morality is to walk "in the Spirit"; and the whole forms a *theology of the Spirit*, a σοφία πνευματική, which in his eyes is "the perfect wisdom."[2]

What then is the Spirit in the thought of Paul? It is with him a hereditary notion; he received it from the Old Testament, and though he developed it, he did so in strict fidelity to the Old Testament. To the prophets the Spirit represented the activity and power of God in the world and in the human heart; it was God himself giving life, revealing himself, acting, directing, profoundly influencing all his creatures. In short, if God, in himself considered, is the divine being in power, apart from all manifestation of himself, the Spirit of God is God in act, God manifested. Thus for the Apostle Paul the Spirit is the divine energy (δύναμις) which, especially in the religious order, is light and life. The Spirit which acted intermittently upon the prophets is in some way individualised in the person of Christ, so that the apostle could say "The Lord is the Spirit," and that to receive Christ and be united to him by faith is at the same time to receive the Spirit as the immanent principle of a new life.[3]

The organic connection between faith and the gift of the Spirit must be before all else emphasised. One can no more exist without the other than form can exist without substance, or cause without effect. It may even be said that in the initial phenomenon of conversion there is but a single and identical psychological process, which on the side of man is an act of faith, on the side of God the gift of the Spirit. "To

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 10-16; 2 Cor. iii. 6, 17; Gal. iii. 3-5, v. 22-25; 1 Cor. xii. 1-13; 2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5; Rom. viii. 2-11; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

[2] 2 Cor. v. 16; Rom. viii. 1-11; Gal. v. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 1-11, ii. 4-13, etc.

[3] Gal. iii. 2, 5; Rom. v. 5; Gal. iii. 14; Eph. i. 13.

believe in Christ," "to be in Christ," "the life of Christ in us," and "to receive the Spirit," are synonymous, or at least religiously equivalent expressions. A Christian, then, is a man who, having believed the gospel, has by that act received into himself the Spirit of Christ as a life principle, the permanent inspiration of his thoughts and acts.

It is not enough to represent the Spirit of God as coming to the help of man's spirit, supplying strength which he lacks, an associate or juxtaposed force, a supernatural auxiliary. Paul's thought has no room for such a moral and psychological dualism, although popular language easily permits it. His thought is quite otherwise profound. There is no simple addition of divine power and human power in the Christian life. The Spirit of God identifies itself with the human Me into which it enters and whose life it becomes. If we may so speak, it is individualised in the new moral personality which it creates. A sort of metamorphosis, a transubstantiation, if the word may be permitted, takes place in the human being.[1] Having been carnal, it has become spiritual. A "new man" arises from the old man by the creative act of the Spirit of God. Hence the strong antitheses by which the Paulinian ethic expresses the passage from the life of the flesh to that of the Spirit. Paul calls Christians πνευματικοί, properly speaking, "the inspired." They are moved and guided by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God dwells in them as an immanent virtue, whose fruits are as organically developed as those of the flesh. Supernatural gifts become natural, or rather, at this mystical height, the antithesis created by scholastic rationalism becomes meaningless and is obliterated.[2]

This action of the Spirit, being essentially moral and regenerating, is felt by all the faculties of soul and body, by the intelligence as much as by the will. It opens the understanding as well as the heart, its warmth becomes also light. The Spirit reveals to the regenerated be-

[1] Appendix LXXXVIII.

[2] 1 Cor. ii. 13, iii. 3; Rom. vii. 12-15, vi. 6; Eph. iv. 23, 24; Col. iii. 9, etc.

liever such things as the carnal man could never have understood.[1] Not that this new knowledge is miraculously perfect and entire from the very beginning. As to this, the apostle positively affirms the contrary. The Christian's religious knowledge remains always partial and progressive.[2] There is nothing in the illuminating influence of the Spirit at all resembling the scholastic miracle of theopneusty. All is organic, interrelated, above all, moral. There is nothing in common with the mantic art of the ancients. Great thoughts spring from faith in the same way as all other virtues, sanctification, missionary zeal, charity. Inspiration is in the essence of faith. All Christians have their part in it; it is a sign by which they are to be recognised. Without it one is not a Christian. He who has not received the Spirit of Christ is none of his. No one confesses the Lordship of Jesus, except by the Holy Spirit.[3]

This state of inspiration as a common and permanent privilege, this transference of the principle and motive of the religious life from the exterior domain of institutions to the conscience, is the vital point of the Paulinian antithesis between the Old and the New Covenants, between the religion of the Letter and the religion of the Spirit. The first made only trembling slaves; the second makes full-grown men, free men, and "sons of God."[4]

Paul explains with peculiar satisfaction the principle and the character of the enfranchisement thus wrought. Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty. The man of the Spirit (πνευματικός) has a norm of more exalted character than other men, in the Spirit that abides within him. He judges all things and is judged by no man. Hagar the slave, symbol of the Mosaic law, brought forth children for servitude; Sarah the wife, representing the evangelical dispensation, brings

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. *Cf.* Matt. xiii. 11.

[2] Appendix LXXXIX.

[3] 1 Cor. xii. 4-11; Rom. viii. 9-14; 1 Cor. xii. 3, etc. The passage from the old religion to the new was the passage from the law and the flesh to faith and the Spirit, Gal. iii. 1-5.

[4] Appendix XC.

forth the children of liberty. "Stand forth, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."[1]

But the Spirit of God or of Christ, which is an inward principle of liberty, is not a mere formal and empty principle. It is not only liberty, but love and holiness. It sanctifies the will and makes it ready to be sacrificed, to devote self without reserve or reckoning to the good of others. Thus it fulfils the substantial justice of the moral law, for love alone fulfils the law; the whole law is summed up in the precept. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," so that the abolition of the old order is in reality the accomplishment of the divine intention for which it was established.[2]

III

The Johannean Doctrine of Inspiration

Coming fifty years later than the Synoptic writings, the Johannean conception of inspiration is still more free from accidental, miraculous, or morbid forms; but its principle and purpose are the same—the autonomy of the Christian conscience.

Paul said, "The Lord is the Spirit." John said, "The Lord is the Word made flesh."[3] The two formulæ belong to two entirely different circles of ideas; but they are religiously equivalent. The revelation or communication of God by the Word is fundamentally identical with the revelation or communication of him by the Spirit. The Word is life and light; it comes into the world as the principle of light and life. Incarnated in Jesus, he came unto his own, who received him not, but to such as received him, he gave the right and the faculty to become "children of God," because they are born of God.[4]

In like manner as the Spirit expresses the divine, universal, and

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15; Gal. iv. 21, v. 1.
[2] Gal. v. 13, vi. 10; Rom. iii. 31.
[3] John i. 14.
[4] John i. 1-12.

eternal basis of the historic person of Jesus, so the substance of the incarnate Word is light and life. Therefore both it and the Spirit should be and may be assimilated by believers, thus becoming the substance of their new personality. The incarnate Logos is the bread of life; he has come down from heaven; he offers himself to be eaten as the divine food which gives eternal life to the soul. This is why in the Fourth Gospel Jesus says and repeatedly insists, in the most paradoxical of symbolisms, " my flesh is food, my blood is drink; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life in himself." All this is admirably clear, and at bottom perfectly simple. The *Logos* or word of God which is in Jesus ought in the same way to become the very nature of the believers. He desires to dwell in them in a permanent way, and they ought to dwell in him, that they may walk in the light, and have eternal life, from the moment that now is.[1]

With a wealth of more or less transparent imagery the author of the Fourth Gospel develops this central thesis of his theology. It would seem as if the action of the Word thus understood must render that of the Spirit superfluous, and it must indeed be avowed that it is impossible to differentiate them substantially from one another. John obeys the same spiritual necessity which controlled the Apostle Paul, who continually speaks concurrently of the work of Christ in us, and of that of the Holy Spirit, which, however, are identical. It is pretty hard to say how our author conceived of the relations between the Word and the Spirit; but it is clear that the Spirit perpetuates in the world the Word which was incarnate in the historic Christ, particularly the subjective action of the Word in the soul, moving it to faith and operating in it the birth from above. This subjective influence develops the new life in the soul, and remains continually present in it as the fountain of revelation, consolation, and comfort, all that is signified by the untranslatable word *Paraclete*. The Word made man could not always continue in the world. He brought to it life and light, and this innermost substance of the Word was to remain in the bosom of humanity after the

[1] Appendix XCI.

historic form under which it had appeared had ceased to exist. From having been local and visible in its first manifestation, the Word thus became a universal principle, invisible, interior to the Christian consciousness. Jesus died; but his Spirit remained among his own, replacing him, or rather, making him more truly present, more active, more powerful, than he had ever been in the days of his flesh.[1] This is the profound meaning of that enigmatic and almost shocking expression to which the Evangelist gives utterance with regard to the promise of the Spirit made by Jesus to believers: "For the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified."[2] The Paraclete could not come so long as Jesus was not gone away. The symbolical act of the Risen Christ, breathing upon his disciples at the moment of quitting them, and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," has no other meaning.[3]

From this dual idea of the Word and the Spirit flows that of the free and permanent inspiration of the Christian. To be a Christian is to be born from above, that is to say, to be born of the Spirit; it is not only to drink of the living water of Christ's words, but to have in one's self a continually upspringing fountain of inspiration and strength;[4] to have the Spirit, not intermittently in one's happier moments, but always, continually, as an ever indwelling consciousness. "You know him," says Jesus, "because he dwells with you and is in you. He will henceforth teach you all things, will recall to your minds and explain to you all things that I have told you. He is the Spirit of truth, who comes from the Father. I have yet many things to say to you, but you could not understand them. The Spirit will lead you into all truth."[5]

How better can it be explained that the Christian revelation is not a book closed and put away; that it is always open and fluid; that to shut it up in a stereotyped letter, like that of the Mosaic law, is to misapprehend it, to fall from the height on which Christ sought to place his fol-

[1] John xvi. 7, 12, 14, 21; xiv. 12, etc.

[2] John vii. 38, 39. [The word "given" is not in the Greek, nor is it supplied in the best French translations.—*Trans.*]

[3] John xx. 22. [4] John vii. 38. [5] John xiv., xv., xvi.

lowers; that in fact, this highest revelation is found not in a sort of *summa* of doctrines once for all formulated and codified, but in the immanence and continuity of a revelatory principle in the Christian soul; not in a book, but in the Spirit which inspires the writing of books, and bears witness in us to the worth and the truth of the books themselves?

IV

The Idea of the Universal Priesthood

In no other New Testament writings do we find so profound a conception of Christian inspiration as in those of Paul and John, but none of them lack indications revealing a state of consciousness such as has just been described.

Thus the Epistle of James shows the still elementary organisation of the earliest Christian communities. The religious services, the ministry of the word and of confession, which later became the monopoly of a clergy, are at this period carried on by all members of the Church according to their individual gifts. The author deprecates their tendency to immoderate zeal, exhorting them to be slow to speak and not court the authority of teacher. Like Paul, and with the same meaning, he calls the gospel "the perfect law of liberty."[1]

The First Epistle of Peter gives much more explicit instruction, more nearly resembling that of Paul, to whose powerful influence it bears witness. Christians are the regenerated, and the Holy Spirit rests upon them, filling them with hope and joy in the midst of tribulations.[2] But a still more interesting idea emerges from these brief pages. Not only are Christians the living stones of the new building, they are also a royal priesthood.[3] In the almost identical terms of the Revelation, Christ has made them "kings and priests" for God his Father. Here, therefore, the idea of a universal priesthood is joined to that of uni-

[1] Jas. iii. 1, v. 16, i. 25.
[2] 1 Peter i. 2, 3; iv. 14: *τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πνεῦμα ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀναπαύεται.*
[3] *Ib.* ii. 5-9; Rev. i. 6, v. 10; Rom. xii. 1.

versal inspiration. In the Old Covenant three classes of persons—kings, prophets, and priests—were exalted above the people, to govern, to reveal the will of God, and to serve as intermediaries or official mediators between them and God. In the New Covenant the elect people, the holy nation as a whole, and with no sort of distinction, is raised to this triple dignity by the Holy Spirit, who thenceforth abides in them. Christians are all at once and individually prophets, priests, and kings. But when every man is king, clearly no man is subject; where everyone is his own prophet and priest there can be no exterior authority to bind the conscience in spite of itself. Monarchy and oligarchy with their gradations in rank have given place to a religious democracy, to the republic of fraternal souls, to the fundamental equality of citizens in the Kingdom of God.

The First Gospel narrates how at the very moment when Jesus yielded up his spirit the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom.[1] This legend has a profound significance, which the Epistle to the Hebrews well interprets. The veil of the temple was a curtain which shut off the Most Holy Place, and behind it none might pass. By the death of Christ that barrier was done away, and the Holy of Holies in which God abides was made accessible to all believers. By such figures Jewish Christian thought expressed essentially the same thought which from his point of view Paul clothed in more mystical expressions, such as filial adoption, peace made with God, the abolition of the law, dying and rising again with Christ. Everywhere and in all cases we find an intense feeling that the old economy of fear and servitude has been done away and has given place to the economy of liberty, love, and joy.

V

The Tradition of the Religion of the Spirit

The religion of the external authority of rites and institutions has in the Catholic Church a tradition greatly enriched and strengthened by

[1] Matt. xxvii. 51. *Cf.* Heb. x. 19, 20.

age; but the religion of the Spirit is not without a tradition of its own. It flows beneath the other, an invisible subterranean stream of thought and life gushing up intermittently through breaches that become larger with the advancing years. There is a never-ceasing struggle between the two traditions as between their principles, and this conflict it is which makes the religious interest of the drama of Church history.

As early as the second century it was evident that the Christian body was growing inwardly cold, while outwardly increasing in numbers and influence. In proportion as the spiritual and moral bonds grew slack which at first sufficed to keep the body united, it became necessary to strengthen them by proportionate exterior bonds, the authority of the political institution and of the sacramental rite. Little by little the word of God yielded place to the word of the bishop, for heart faith was substituted the rule of faith, for repentance and piety the sacrament, legal discipline for fraternal love and obedience for inspiration. The established order was held to be the divine order; those became more and more rare who held aloof from it by reason of independence or of fidelity to their ideal; they were either fantastic spirits like the author of the "Shepherd of Hermas," or ranters like the prophets of Montanism, whom the Church condemned as heretics. Henceforth in the Catholic system individual inspiration, the self-assertion of the conscience, became the worst of heresies, being the mother of almost all the others.

It would be to show equal ignorance and injustice to indulge in surprise at the strange and unwholesome forms which Christian inspiration took on in the course of centuries, sometimes even bordering upon mental alienation, and to hold them up as the sufficient argument against inspiration. Religious madmen are made indeed by isolation, persecutions, and imprisonment. The dragoons of Louis XIV made the prophets of the Cevennes. Under the oppression of a tyrannical authority all forms of the religious life become changed, imaginations are stimulated, and minds become unsettled. The best way to restore

calmness to disquieted souls and to bring their personal inspirations within the bounds of reason is to establish freedom in the common life.

While the Catholic Church was organising its formidable system of authority the religion of the Spirit took refuge below the surface, and maintained its existence in the inner life of humble and pious souls, and in the travail of thought of a few elect spirits. For example, we find it burning in the inspired letter of the Christians of Lyons and Vienne to the Churches of Asia, which we read in Eusebius. We find it again in a loftier and somewhat rationalistic form in the teachings of Origen and Clement of Alexandria. It is latent in every great theological speculation.

In the early centuries its finest manifestation and most exquisite fruit are found in the "Confessions" of St. Augustine. There were two men in this Doctor of the Church; the son of Monica and the orthodox bishop, the man of the Spirit and the man of authority. Likewise in his doctrine we find the theology of faith, whence have issued two currents, traversing all the Middle Ages: the scholastic stream which ends in the triumph of Roman Curialism and the mystical stream which ends in the Reformation. The ardent piety of St. Bernard and of Gerson, the theology of St. Victor and his disciples, the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," the preaching of Tauler, the Friends of God, the Brothers of the Common Life, the reforms of Peter Waldo and the initiative of Francis of Assisi, are proofs that the divine stream never ran dry, and that, whether under the open sky or in the shades of monastic retreats, it never ceased to refresh those souls that were athirst for God.

It grew larger, stronger, more free, in the sixteenth century. Luther and Calvin triumphantly levelled the bounds which had imprisoned it. Authority was vanquished by conscience, piety was enfranchised from its ancient wardship—at least in principle. It shared the life of the age, and came into immediate contact with modern culture, thenceforth being at once influenced by and freely influencing it. Thus we see religion renouncing its claim to a separate and supernatural

existence, becoming more and more laicised, after the example of all other normal activities of the spirit, entering the domain of human affairs, and there acting as an inward leaven to raise the inert mass, not changing its nature, but regenerating and sanctifying it. Under the massive form of a divine sacerdotal system and an intangible dogma religion is a fetter or a menace to social and individual development; set free from the rites and institutions with which it had been identified, it becomes a penetrating fluid, a savour of life, carrying health and peace wherever it goes. I admit that I am speaking of a new religious ideal, but it is an ideal which since the sixteenth century has been becoming ever more and more a reality.

The Reformation of Luther, the pietism and critical rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the religious revival of the nineteenth, and finally the present alliance of Christian life with scientific theology, are waymarks along the road, marking the progress made by the religion of the Spirit.

We are able to judge more accurately of its principle and its forms than could the greatest minds of past ages. Delirium no longer appears to us, as to Plato, the highest manifestation of the divine spirit. To be the subject of visions, ecstasies, hallucinations, to hear voices, fall into convulsions, and speak by inarticulate cries or obscure sounds, are so many symptoms of diseases whose course is known, and which the science of medicine undertakes to alleviate or cure. In like manner, thought is set free from the old antithesis of the natural and the supernatural, since our idea of nature has become large enough and flexible enough to include all phenomena, ordinary and extraordinary when duly authenticated, and our piety profound enough and spiritual enough to feel the divine influence even more surely in the harmonious and regular course of things than in such events as at times seem to interrupt it. Therefore it is for just cause that we have come to recognise divine inspiration more easily in a healthy condition of our being than in morbid states, and in the calm and clear voice of reason and conscience

rather than in the tumult and disorder of the senses and the imagination.

If the presence of the Spirit of God in the spirit of man thus gives itself to be recognised most perfectly in the active energy of the latter, in the normal and honest play and deploying of all his faculties, it is clear that not only there can never be any irreducible antagonism between the religion of the Spirit and modern science and ethics, but that both the investigations and acquisitions of the one, the generous and holy affirmations of the other, must unceasingly appear to a sound piety as positive forms and manifestations of the religion of the Spirit. The gospel, which is the preaching of this religion at once human and divine, proposes not to ransom and sanctify merely one part of man, but the entire man, with all his faculties; so that in the end the established kingdom of God shall coincide perfectly with the realisation of the largest and highest ideal of human activity. All asceticism, and the dualism which asceticism implies, are thus radically done away in religion as in morals and culture.

But, it may be said, reduced to these terms will not the religion of the Spirit be a useless luxury, at best a poem? To ask this is in fact to ask if the sentiment of the presence of God in the heart, the conscience, and the reason is something superfluous, and faith in his help in the inward and outward struggles and temptations of life a vanity. To this question we have not only the reply of pious men who have made the experiment, in all their native weaknesses and wretchedness, and can say at what price the victory may be won, we can also appeal to the testimony of sober-minded moralists, who know that it is impossible for man to believe in himself without believing in God, who consecrates the human ideal, and maintains its ultimate sovereignty over the blind fatalism of physical nature. To state it aright, whoever does not despair of the ideal duty imposed upon him, whoever affirms the ultimate triumph of good in the world, asserts the presence and influence of God; for the good is his highest name, and the progress of the good in

us upon earth and in heaven is properly his mysterious and blessed work.

Human faculties and the whole human being have two sides which are in striking and tragical contrast. On one side are reason, sentiment, consciousness, things vacillating, desperately miserable, and by nature affected with a powerlessness which easily gives reason to sceptics and pessimists! He who does not feel all this deceives or stultifies himself. There is always a touch of melancholy in the most serious effort and even in the most fortunate success. But on the other hand, under all manifestations of this ephemeral and empirical *Me* there is I know not what invincible force, what ever renewed energy, what ever upspringing fountain of faith and hope in the Spirit following upon all disappointments, all defeats. *Est Deus in nobis.* In the Me there is a mysterious guest, greater than the Me, and to which the Me instinctively addresses its prayer and its trust. Wretchedness and grandeur, defeat and victory, all weakness and all strength! In each human being exists that strange contrast which we find so strikingly in the life and death of him who called himself the Son of man, in whom were united all that is weakest and most sorrowful in humanity and all that is strongest and sweetest in God. Our name, like his, is truly Emmanuel: God with us.

The transformation of the Christian consciousness and its liberation from all exterior servitude began on the day when piety and science first met. They will be completed, and the religion of the Spirit will reign, all systems of authority having been done away, on the day when piety and science shall have become so mutually interpenetrated as to be thoroughly united into a single entity; inward piety the conscience of science, and science the legitimate expression of piety. This being the case, nothing appears to be more urgent than the constitution of a truly scientific theology.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTENT OF THE RELIGION OF THE SPIRIT

I

An Antinomy Resolved

Considered exclusively in its antithesis with the religions of authority, the religion of the Spirit appears chiefly under a formal and negative aspect. It is easy to see what it is not; what it is does not appear. Nevertheless the Spirit which enfranchises the religious consciousness, giving it its inner norm, is a positive and well-defined power. To arrive at a complete definition of the religion of the Spirit this power must be defined and its principle recognised.

The form of the religion of the Spirit is liberty; its content is the gospel.

But here an antinomy at once presents itself, which it is before all things important to examine and resolve. Is it possible to attribute to the religion of the Spirit a substantial and particular content without compromising its pure spirituality? Is not the device of modern Protestantism—the gospel and liberty—in itself contradictory? Must not liberty destroy the gospel? Does not the gospel restrain liberty?

It is evident that everything here depends upon the notion which is entertained of the gospel and of liberty. The contradiction is flagrant and irreconcilable if by the gospel is understood an exterior letter, a formula, a doctrine authoritatively imposed upon man, or if liberty is understood as a state of absolute indecision and indifference. But if to be free is to be autonomous, that is, to have the law within one's self, and if the gospel is nothing else than the incitement to a purely religious and moral act, the result of which is to bring God to dwell in the consciousness as its very principle, its peculiar energy and law,

nothing can be more evident than that the apparent antithesis between liberty and the gospel finds a happy solution in the very notion of the Spirit. What, in fact, is the free spirit, if not the spirit which has in itself its own law and power of decision?

We must strip the subject of logical abstractions which warp the data of the problem. Unquestionably, abstract freedom is identical with absolute indeterminateness, but absolute indeterminateness is a word empty of all reality; it is not to be found in the religious and moral life. Everything that exists is determined, because everything that exists is conditioned. Liberty is a quality, a form of the activity of the spirit, but the spirit is free only to determine itself, and not to remain in a state of indetermination, which would be self-destruction. Indeterminateness is annihilation. Whence it follows that liberty remaining persistently undetermined becomes the contrary of liberty, its negation. It turns back upon and destroys itself. It is as if the will consisted in willing nothing.

This is why liberty has a law. In morals, its necessary content and its law is duty. Let no one say that the law of duty restrains or destroys liberty; experience demonstrates the contrary. Duty sustains, fosters, gives life to liberty. In fact, outside of duty there is no liberty, as without liberty there is no duty. They are correlative and inseparable terms, like form and substance. Liberty is the form of duty, and duty is the substance of liberty.

The religious consciousness yields to the same analysis as the moral consciousness. Here again active liberty is not the indeterminateness of consciousness, but its autonomy. The common notion that liberty consists in doing or not doing, thinking or not thinking, willing or not willing whatever one may choose, degrades liberty to caprice, and caprice, being determined by the reflex movements of the organism, is precisely the opposite of liberty. To be free is not to be without law, it is to obey the law of one's being; servitude is subjection to that of another. The individual man from his birth is in a state of becoming,

as humanity has been since the beginning of the world. Emerging from animality, man is not, he is being made; he is called to realise his moral being according to what physiologists call a "directing" or a "morphological" idea latent in his organism, which is what Christians call the power and vocation of the Holy Spirit inherent in his soul. This idea, or rather, this force which from on high calls him and draws him, is the moral substance of his *Me*, the ideal law of his being, which he must obey under peril of destroying himself, of falling short of life and happiness, of losing himself. Resisting this law he resists not another, but himself. God is in man, but in such wise that man can do violence to God only by first smiting and wounding himself.

In fact, the law of his being is the law of Him who called him into life. Divine law and human law are essentially identical. And it is this immanent law which, in proportion as man becomes more clearly conscious of it, necessarily constitutes him at the same time dependent, in his character as a created being, and free, in so far as he is a moral and spiritual being. This is why there is such a thing as religion. Religion is the vital and happy reconciliation of dependence and freedom.

Thence it follows that it is impossible for a moral being, that is, a being who knows and consents to the law of his being, not to be in some measure religious, the religious sentiment being at bottom nothing other than the sentiment of the relation between the moral being and the law which governs him. For this it is not necessary to believe in God in the traditional sense of the word; every man who inwardly consents to and devotes himself to his law, the ideal law of humanity, and wills this law, performs an act of religious faith, avowedly or not, in the precise measure of the energy and sincerity of his consent; he prostrates himself and performs an act of adoration.

The freedom of the religious consciousness does not then depend upon the denial of this relation, but upon the terms in which it is constituted, the rule which conditions and determines it. Just as my moral con-

sciousness is oppressed by a legislation, civil or otherwise, whose prescriptions are entirely foreign to it, so my religious consciousness may be oppressed by being subjected to the yoke of an exterior authority which clashes with its personal inspirations. Inevitably conflict and revolt result from such a condition. But my religious consciousness regains liberty and joy so soon as it becomes again autonomous, that is, so soon as it recognises that the law to which it has given its faith is in reality nothing other than its own law.

Such a condition is not produced all at once nor in a single day. The progress of history and that of education have part in it. The conditions and the phases under which human life is developed render necessary also stages of progress in the religious evolution. The child is born in tutelage and must be guided by an external law; but his parents and masters, by awakening his reason and conscience, bring to light within him an inward inspiration which is nourished and strengthened by all it feeds on, and soon asserts itself as an autonomous power, which judges of all things, and will obey only where it is first convinced. This power is the divine element in man; it is the Spirit witnessing with his spirit; it is the source of all true conviction. Authority and custom may impose a belief, but the inward witness alone can give conviction of it. This is why the inward tribunal is the last appeal for every conscious adult individual. Look at Luther at Worms facing all the authority of the Church and the Empire with the words: "I can do no otherwise; God help me!"

Thus, by the mere progress of moral and religious education the rule of the life of the Spirit, in early years an exterior force, becomes more and more interior; and purifying itself more and more, ridding itself of all that is not strictly spiritual and moral, becomes incorporated with the very consciousness and cannot be distinguished from it.

In the person of Jesus Christ this interiorising process of the religious and moral law was perfectly carried out, and became the very principle of his gospel. To Jesus of Nazareth there was nothing ex-

ternal in religion. The new covenant which he brought to men was not written upon tables of stone, but upon the tables of his heart, and sealed by the witness of the Holy Spirit. Never was will more submissive to the will of God, and never was will more autonomous. The divine and the human were so intimately interpenetrated that the first found its full and complete revelation in the second. Jesus never appears to act by constraint; he is always inspired. His religion was essentially the religion of the Spirit, and remains forever its source and its perfect type. He desired to communicate to his disciples this religious and moral consciousness, at once submissive, autonomous, inspired by the inward presence of God, that they too might become sons of the Father, and free like himself. It was, properly speaking, his Spirit which would pass into all Christians, giving them all to have in themselves the norm of thought and life. "Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty."

Of this Spirit the gospel is simply the vehicle and the expression. It is not a new law, nor a code of new beliefs; it is the law of the Father and the truth of the Father becoming inward in man; it is a permanent fountain of inspiration, so that the gospel properly becomes the law of human consciousness and is forever inseparable from it. Thus is established the same correlation which has already been shown to exist between moral liberty and duty. The religion of the Spirit is the adequate and natural form of the gospel, and the gospel is the content, the very substance, of the religion of the Spirit. They form an organic unity, which is destroyed when they are separated and set one over against the other.

II

The Gospel of Salvation

This conviction becomes stronger in proportion as one penetrates more deeply into the spirit, the innermost meaning, and the specific character of the gospel of Jesus. Here an effort is the more necessary because the Master, who spoke the language and made use of the ideas of his

time, always clung closely to the traditions of his people, and furthermore, suited his teachings always to the occasion, and always said to his hearers just that which they personally needed to hear; hence it is continually necessary that we should overlook the details of his teachings, and pierce through their historic envelope, if we would seize the common thought which inspires them, the general purpose which was revealed in them. Never was teaching more desultory, and nevertheless, never was teaching more a unit, nor more consistent. The question is simply whether it was really a teaching in the true sense of the word.

I have read the Gospels and re-read them. Never once, in any connection, not more in the narrative of St. John than in the synoptic tradition, have I found Jesus in the order of the idea, or of theoretic instruction; he is always in the practical order of life and moral activity. He never claimed to be a philosopher or a learned teacher, but a physician.[1] I should be at a loss to say what new knowledge or belief he introduced into the world. The mysteries of the Kingdom of God which he revealed are such as can be revealed to the heart of the ignorant and the humble, not to the mind of the intelligent and the wise. What he brought in himself and sought to communicate was a new life. His work was therapeutic; he sought to restore the entire human being to health. With him teaching was only a means of healing. He himself thus characterised his ministry in his reply to the messengers from the Baptist, and his first preaching at Nazareth. The Son of man is come to seek that which is lost, to heal the sick, to preach good things to the poor, to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for those who are the slaves of evil in all its forms.[2]

No one ever gains anything by discussing ideas with him. It always gives rise to misapprehension, for those he offers and those that are asked of him are not in the same order of things. Plato asks what are the relations between the ideal and the real; Laplace seeks to know the

[1] Mark ii. 17, and paral.

[2] Matt. xi. 1-6; Luke iv. 17-19; Matt. xi. 28; Luke xix. 10; Mark x. 45, etc.

origin of the Cosmos; criticism seeks to discover whether the books attributed to Moses are really his; and Jesus, as if he had not heard them, replies, in his sweet, strong voice, "Blessed are the poor, theirs is the Kingdom; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the pure in heart! Come unto me, ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" Evidently, under these conditions, conversation is impossible.

Jesus, as Pascal says, did not come, and needed not to come, with the pomp of Alexander or the genius and knowledge of Archimedes. He came with the only distinctions of his order—holiness and charity. He addressed himself to the heart, because in the heart are all the issues of life, springs that he desired to reopen and cleanse, being sure that in renewing them he would renew the whole life.

For this reason, having been born in the tradition of his people, he remained within its limits with perfect simplicity, and related all his teachings to it. In all freedom he moved within the narrow framework of popular notions, as a physician in the cabin of the poor makes use of such resources and appliances as it may furnish, and with their help saves the sick to whom he has been called.

What matter forms and methods? It was not in ideas and theories that Jesus rested his confidence. He knew that the virtue of his words was in himself. It was the presence and the gift of his person which acted upon souls, whatever the form or the means by which his presence was manifested and his gift applied. He therefore spoke and acted at any given time in the manner best adapted to bring himself into contact with those whom he met along his way; his one purpose was to touch the central vital point at which life could be called into being. His preachings and promises are in Messianic and eschatological form because they could have been in no other. But all this was only the outer shell. It must be broken if we would reach the tender and relishing kernel. To heal and to save were for him synonymous terms. This is why his gospel is the gospel of salvation. Salvation is the end of

every religion, but the idea of salvation is as variable as that of the highest good; it becomes exalted and ennobled along with consciousness itself. The savage asks his fetich for a fish or for good hunting, because his existence depends upon them. For the pious Israelite of old the idea of salvation was still confined to that of individual and national felicity, with a long life upon earth. In the prophets the idea became spiritualised. Into the hope of Messianic salvation entered a strong admixture of the material and moral elements of happiness. In the consciousness of Jesus the moral notion became dominant; the apocalyptic framework of the Kingdom was not eliminated from his discourses, but the centre of gravity of faith was displaced; henceforth it is in the heart. Salvation is deliverance from the power of evil, it is filial communion with God, which, restored to its proper place in the heart, henceforth becomes the spring of the believer's peace and joy, the true germ of eternal life, the victory of the Spirit.

It is impossible for man to become conscious of himself without sitting in judgment upon himself. This judgment of conscience awakens within him the immediate and universal sense of sin, which is the more vivid and profound as God speaks more loudly and distinctly within him. The sense of sin is born in us of the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is why it is an essential and primitive element of the religion of the Spirit. To hope to enter it by another door is to indulge in a very dangerous delusion.

Undoubtedly Jesus did not fail to recognise the diversity of moral disposition among individuals; he used without scruple the popular categories of "good and bad," "just and unjust." But his true thought is not doubtful, when refusing for himself the title of "good," he reserves it for God alone; or when he relates the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, or distinctly says that the tree must be made good before it can bear good fruit. Jesus never discusses nor speculates upon the origin and essence of sin; he constructs no theory of it, he simply proposes to awaken a sense of it. He makes use of the most

familiar images, such as a mortal illness, a debt which the debtor cannot extinguish and the creditor must remit, a weakness of the flesh, a disrespect of the will of God, a corruption of the heart, an evil power forming an empire of which Satan is the head. But these are simply so many popular locutions and figures of speech which it would be useless to press in the hope of deducing from them any dogmatic theory whatsoever. For Jesus, they were mediums and methods by which to arouse and deepen the sense of sin and create a moral disposition toward repentance, a desire for pardon and inward amendment, to which the "good message" which he brought to sinners in the name of the Father would at once respond.

Nor does he step outside the limits of moral and religious experience when he explains the content of the divine message; he replies to the uncertain voice of the human conscience by proclaiming the gospel of pardon. God is a father; he loves his sick and wandering children with a love that surpasses thought. He seeks after them, pardons them, calls them to himself; he desires to save them, and to give them, with his Spirit, eternal life. Jesus is no less formal with regard to the conditions of pardon and salvation. He lays down only one—*faith.* "Change your ways and believe the good news." We say only one, for the change of ways, the return to God by repentance, and faith, are not two things which it is possible to separate. Repentance is the beginning of faith, and faith is the completion of repentance. Both belong to the moral order of heart and will, and to the intellectual order of knowledge.

Care must be taken not to confuse faith with belief. Being different in origin, the two words are of very distinct significance; they designate two acts of the soul, which, notwithstanding their intimate alliance and frequent simultaneity, belong to two orders as different as those of the heart and the intelligence. In the evangelical sense, and in the discourses of Jesus Christ, faith always implies a moral relation between person and person. It is an act of confidence in God, in his justice and

his love, the gift of the entire heart, the consecration of the will.[1] The nature of faith is determined by its object. This object is God, coming in person to man with his promises, blotting out sin and taking up his abode in the conscience of men as a Spirit of strength and life, to cause the spirit of those who receive him to live and develop. This is why faith is necessarily followed by the gifts of the Spirit, this is why it justifies and sanctifies the sinner.

Faith thus understood is God consciously felt in the heart, the inward revelation of God and of his habitation in us. This is the religious originality of the gospel, the characteristic which most profoundly separates it from the Mosaic and other religions of antiquity. Faith, then, remains the generating principle of the religion of the Spirit, for in and by it the Spirit of God and the spirit of man meet, enter into one another, and so form a happy and indissoluble unity.

From one end to the other the gospel of salvation moves in the order of the moral life: sense of sin, repentance, love of God, faith, all these elements are of the same nature. Salvation and the higher life of the Spirit are not bound to a doctrinal yoke, a burden of practices and good works which a man must take upon his shoulders, will he nill he, by ascetic virtue. Cease, then, troubled souls, from needlessly tormenting yourselves with the belief that you are outside of the religion of salvation because you vainly attempt to appropriate dogmas and beliefs against which your reason and conscience invincibly protest. And you also, souls out of conceit with faith; no longer turn away from the gospel of salvation because an intolerable theology has awakened in you disdain or contempt. There is nothing in the gospel which your conscience may not recognise as that highest good to which secretly it aspires; nothing which, if you sincerely desire it, you cannot yourself experience, and thus recognise it as the very soul of your soul. The true gospel is the salvation of every man in distress, by enabling him trustfully to

[1] Mark xi. 22: ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. Matt. xxi. 21: *Fidem quam par est,* excellently says Bengel, *habere eos qui Deum habent.*

return to God. It is all the simple and yet profound story of the Prodigal Son.[1]

III

The Gospel of Salvation and the Person of Christ

HERE we reach the real difficulty. Does not the person of Jesus occupy the central place in his gospel? Is it not presented as the object of faith and love? Can one be a Christian without being attached to his person by an especial tie? And on the other hand, if this exterior historic element is essential to Christianity, can the latter still be proposed as pure religion, the wholly interior and moral religion of the Spirit?

I have nowhere found this point satisfactorily cleared up. The most pious as the most learned men waver between the orthodox solution, which makes of the historic person of Jesus a metaphysical entity, a second God in the dogma of the Trinity, and the solution of Unitarian rationalism, which breaks every tie between the person of Jesus and the Christian faith, and makes him a prophet, and a martyr to his gospel. Some mitigate the orthodox doctrine, contenting themselves with affirming the pre-existence of the person of Jesus, but none the less setting him apart from the human race, making him radically a stranger to it, simply entering and passing through it by an arbitrary act of his will. Others with pious effusion veil their rationalism with a mystical cloud, but at bottom Jesus remains a man, and they cannot explain the part which he attributes to himself when he says to his disciples, "Come to me, believe in me, confess me before men, love me more than father or mother, follow me," etc. The former offend against history, the latter against piety, or rather, they wound the Christian consciousness in its deepest and most sensitive place.

The orthodox doctrine of the divinity of Christ distorts the true character of the gospel of salvation not less than the rational doctrine, and is no less outside the authentic preaching of the Master. To what in his person do they in fact attract the attention and adoration of the

[1] Appendix XCII.

believer? Is it not above all to his metaphysical dignity, (eternal pre-existence, *homoousia* of the Father and the Son, etc.), that is, to an element in which there is nothing moral or religious, from which it results that we ought to adore Jesus because of his exalted nature, his transcendent and divine power, independently of what he has done for us? All this is positively outside of Christianity and outside of the gospel of salvation. Jesus never demanded such adoration from his disciples nor laid claim to this metaphysical dignity. In this conception every tie is broken between Jesus and his gospel, which is wholly moral and spiritual, as well as between it and the Christian consciousness. Observe, further, the practical consequences. The subtile metaphysic of the dogma of the Trinity is necessarily transformed, in the piety of the simple, into a sort of mythology, and tritheism, issuing in idolatry. There is nothing surprising in this. In the dogma of the Trinity there is a root of paganism.

On the other hand, rationalism ends no less fatally by making a law of the gospel; monotheism is thus saved, but God remains always external to man. By this view Christianity is degraded and descends to the rank of a Judaism torn out of its national surroundings. Hence a paganising tendency in one class, and a Judaising in the other—two contrary tendencies. Christian thought seems to be powerless to avoid the one without succumbing to the other.

The way of escape is in the religion of the Spirit; it enables us to surmount both. Far from opposing and excluding the part which Jesus gave to his person in his preaching, the religion of the Spirit offers the sole point of view from which this part may be explained and justified.

Many modern theologians, desiring to reduce to a system the gospel of salvation of which the essential elements have been given above, speak of the " paternal theism " of Jesus, and deem that they have thus aptly defined the doctrine which one must believe in order to be a Christian. They are not aware that in thus changing the gospel into a doctrine,—it matters little whether excellent or not,—they distort its essential char-

acter, and make it to pass from the order of life to that of thought, from the order of the heart into that of the intelligence. Jesus would not recognise his own work here. We admit that it may be maintained in the schools—and we might discuss it as we would discuss any other interpretation—that " paternal theism," as it is called, comes at the end of Christian theology as the best theoretical expression of the doctrine brought to life by the influence of Jesus; but the gospel history forbids that this doctrine of paternal theism should be set down as the premiss of the gospel and the object of the preaching of Jesus. This would make him a scribe, more enlightened than the others, and nothing more. But Jesus never taught any particular doctrine as to God, sin, the future life; he never concerned himself to build up a system of theology which he could first teach his disciples and afterward draw from it moral applications more or less new. Once again, his work was of another order.

He brought in no new religious ideas; he made use of those that he found at hand, choosing those best adapted to his purpose. His unique and persistent purpose was to create a new religious life in the souls of his disciples, to animate them with his own faith. Exhortations and healings, parables and acts of mercy, are, if we rightly apprehend them, only means for him, the vehicles of the divine spark which he purposed to enkindle in the heart.

From whence came this spark? How could Jesus modify and renew the religious consciousness of his disciples, otherwise than by imparting to them the purely religious and moral content of his own consciousness, by making them experience what he himself experienced—in other words, by transforming them into his image and resemblance by the insistent influence of his whole being?

Let us consider the matter: if Jesus taught no new doctrine, but simply proposed to give to weary and burdened souls that which he had in himself, what else could he do than point them to his own person, saying in tones till then unheard, " Come unto me; ye shall find rest

for your souls; follow me, love me, believe in me; I live in the Father and the Father is in me." So he invites them to enter into the mystery of his own inward life, the sacred place where the Father and the Son hold communion, and reveal to one another their mutual love and faith. If he did not do this, Jesus did nothing and could do nothing, since he taught us no new religious doctrine. But this was his Messianic vocation, understood as that of Saviour of his people; in this was the intrinsic force of his words, the efficient power for salvation which they bore in themselves.

Let us follow out this historical analysis. Why did Jesus desire thus to introduce his disciples into the intimacy of his own consciousness? What did he expect them to find there, and what bring away? Did he propose to dazzle them with the metaphysical brightness of a supernatural being, with the glorious power of a God who had come down to earth? Let us put away all these pagan imaginings, more worthy of the worshippers on Olympus than of those on Tabor, and absolutely foreign to the thought of the Master who was meek and lowly of heart. Have you not, indeed, been struck with the fact that this preaching of himself, which in any other man would be the acme of pride and folly, never seems inconsistent with his humility, and militates little against his good sense? In it is mingled no egotistic or vain-glorious preoccupation. With absolute simplicity Jesus in the same breath declares that God alone is good, confesses his own ignorance, submits himself to the Father's will, precisely as he would have his humblest disciple do, likens himself to them, makes their interests his own, feels that he is one with them as he is one with his Father who is in heaven, and introduces them into the intimacy of his own spiritual life, in order that they may draw therefrom a religious consciousness like his own, that they like him may enter into filial relations with the Father who is also their Father, in order to become religiously like him, and be his brethren, his friends, his family. In other words, it is his will that in him, in heart communion with him, they may find the Father. Thus he calls

them to himself only that he may lead them to God, in order that then, more than ever, God, and God alone, may be the supreme object of their faith and love.

Thus there are not two things in the gospel, a moral doctrine and a metaphysical doctrine of the person of Jesus set over against and outside of it. The dignity of the person of Jesus is not his metaphysical essence, but the purely moral and religious content of his consciousness. His person is the incarnation, the living expression, of the gospel. From his person the gospel receives its creative virtue; it enters the world as a historic potency, a leaven of renovation and of life. The religious consciousness of Christ, far from being an obstacle to the religion of the Spirit, is the elect point in the world, the holy place, from which this religion, like the river that flowed forth from the temple, gushes forth a living spring to water all future generations.

To believe in Christ, to be united to him by the influence of his word and work, is in fact nothing else than to believe the gospel, or more properly speaking, to receive it as a living principle and realise it in ourselves. This is not a new condition of salvation added to that which Jesus himself had earlier laid down, namely, the return to God by faith. The Master freely admitted that one might be saved without personally confessing his name. The important point was not to proclaim and glorify him as Lord, but to do the will of the Father. And on the other hand he declared that all manner of sins could be forgiven men, even evil speaking against the Son of man. And if this declaration is applicable to those who blaspheme him, *so much the more* must it apply to those who know him not.[1]

The only sin which cannot obtain pardon is the sin "against the Holy Ghost," that is, persistent contempt and violation of the witness of God in the consciousness. Is not this the authentication of the religion of the Spirit, in which only man himself can entirely save or lose himself? Yes, Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. But if to love Jesus Christ and be joined to him is to follow the way of truth

[1] Matt. xii. 32; Luke xii. 10.

and life, it is equally true that to love truth above all other things, to dedicate one's self to it and rest one's hope in it, is still one way of following Jesus, of walking in his footsteps and essentially finding him, even though one misapprehends and stands aloof from him. Such ignorance and misconception are only for a time, and when the veil is drawn away, when broad day succeeds to the twilight of the present hour, those who repulsed Christ because they knew him not will perceive that in their pursuit of truth they were obeying the guidance of his Spirit, all unknown to themselves.

Nevertheless it is evident why in the normal course of things the person of Christ is the essential factor in the Christian religion, and why Christianity cannot be severed from him without death. That which makes us Christians is not the letter of the gospel, it is the Spirit of Christ. But the Spirit is the emanation of his consciousness. Entering into ours it transforms it from the consciousness of a wretched and sinful man into the consciousness of a child of the Father. This is why the heart of every Christian is bound to Jesus Christ and must ever be so bound; bound to the story of his outward life as the type of life which it is his task to reproduce, bound to his person as the source of holy inspiration, without which he can do nothing. The full and normal development of the Christian consciousness can take place only under the influence of Christ. He is the vine whose sap flows into the branches. His consciousness is the generating cell whence proceed all other like cells of that social organism which Paul calls his body, and of which his Spirit is the common, sovereign soul.

Then we perceive the sense in which Christ is the mediator. Not in the hierarchical sense in which Catholics have instituted the mediation of the Virgin Mary and the saints; not in the sense that we have in him a secondary God, more human, and more accessible to our prayers and our complaints. We do not address ourselves to Jesus by way of dispensing ourselves from going to the Father. Far from this, we go to Christ and abide in him, precisely that we may find the Father. We

abide in him that his filial consciousness may become our own, that his Spirit may become our Spirit, and that God may dwell immediately in us as he dwelt in him. Nothing in all this carries us outside of the religion of the Spirit; on the contrary it is its seal and confirmation.

IV

Faith, Belief, and Theology

In all that has preceded I have carefully distinguished between faith and belief, reserving the first expression for that act of heart and will—an essentially moral act—whereby man accepts the gift of God and his forgiveness, and consecrates himself to him; and applying the second to that intellectual act by which the mind gives its consent to a historic fact and to a doctrine. This distinction has become necessary in our day [1] for everyone who seeks to apprehend the true character of the gospel of salvation, and understand in what way it saves us. That which saves the soul is faith, not belief. God demands the heart of man, because the heart once gained and changed all the rest follows, while the gift of all the rest without the heart is only a seeming, and leaves the man in his first estate.

Is this to say that psychologically faith can ever be found without some belief, the sentiment without the idea, and that doctrine is a matter of indifference to piety? Both propositions are absurd, and can never occur to a reasonable mind. Every psychical act tends to become conscient, and by this very fact to produce a representative and suggestive image, an idea, capable not only of perpetuating the memory of the act, but also of reproducing it. But this organic connection of the moral with the intellectual element in the religious act of faith and conversion can never hinder our perceiving the specific nature of each, or observing that whatever in faith is of the intellectual order is not that in which its saving virtue consists; both because intellectual operations are governed by other laws than those which rule the moral will,

[1] Appendix XCIII.

and because the gift of God in the gospel, being a moral act of God, can in no otherwise be received or even comprehended, but by a corresponding moral act in man.

The moral revelation of God is accompanied by a peculiar evidence, which to be apprehended needs only a pure heart and an upright will. Faith addresses itself to verities of this order. It implicates the moral activity of the spirit. Its object is always a moral or religious reality immediately manifest to consciousness, without other demonstration than the inward demonstration of the Holy Spirit. This is why the true beginning of faith is a change effected in the moral disposition of the soul, and its end entire and final consecration to the will of God. No doubt faith presupposes that the good news has been heard, but it is born only of the witness of God within us.

Of a different nature is the act by which the mind holds a history or a doctrine as true upon the authority of a tradition, a witness, or any tribunal soever. The certitude of such a belief is neither of the same species nor in the same degree as the certitude of faith. Belief and faith are neither destroyed nor restored by the same causes. Nothing but sin, frivolity of heart, the death of the conscience, can very gravely disturb the essential relations between the soul and its ideal law, the inward principle of its life, that is to say, its God. Though enfeebled or extinct, faith can always be born again in self-recollection, repentance, and prayer. On the contrary, a belief once overthrown by criticism can never again be built up. Doubt corrodes it until a new conception of things finally does away with it and gives its place to another. The verbal inspiration of the Bible, demoniac possession, the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, were once beliefs; but now they have vanished away. Little by little belief, first erected into dogma, becomes attenuated into an opinion, and finally gives way to something entirely different. This is the inevitable law of the historic evolution of human ideas. Every religious and moral faith clothes itself in an intellectual form as a means of self-manifestation and propagation. But every such intellectual

form is fatally inadequate to its object and to that extent simply symbolical; with the process of time it undergoes various interpretations or becomes profoundly modified. In an active and vital religion the warp remains the same, but the tissue is changed by the continual addition of new threads and the dropping out of old, worn-out, and decaying elements. This is why we have a history of dogma. The history of the dogmas of expiation and of the divinity of Christ is particularly instructive.

The effect of this mobility of the forms of belief is to constrain faith—which in the beginning appeared to be one with belief—to take clearer cognisance of its essential principle and native independence. In the Old Testament faith was bound up with legal observances. In St. Paul it works free from the Mosaic law, the entire ritual part of which is struck with death. In Luther it asserts its independence of the commandments of the Church. Later Protestant orthodoxy sought to hold it in bondage to a certain number of dogmas. In our days, it is still carrying on the struggle, and is gradually triumphing by establishing a clear distinction between itself and all forms of belief.

The more we insist upon this capital distinction the more essential it is to establish the organic connection between doctrine and faith, their vital solidarity. In the domain of the soul's life all things are interlinked and interdependent, there is an uninterrupted series of mutual actions and reactions of all its elements. Even a momentary interruption is disease; long continued it is death. If faith gives birth to doctrine, doctrine in its turn may produce faith, and in every case it either sustains faith or paralyses it. No feeling is sterile for thought; no thought is sterile in the life of the heart. Disastrous consequences as surely flow from error as luminous inspiration from the good willed and performed. Life comes before thought, religion before theology; but the labour of thought either enriches or impoverishes life, and theology either serves or compromises religion. Hence the importance of a sound and right theology.

Theology is spontaneously born of faith as philosophy of experience. Its character and function are twofold; it is at the same time critical and positive.

Being critical it aids the Christian consciousness of any given time in getting a grasp of its principle, in apprehending it in its original native purity, in disengaging it from inconsistencies and errors which, however incessantly it may war against them, continually spring up again and threaten to stifle it.

On the one hand are paganism and Judaism, affecting the very essence of the Christian spirit; and on the other traditionalism, which steals away its liberty, and *independency*, which, cutting it off at the roots, checks the flow of its sap.

The pagan tendency finds its most obvious and crudest expression in Catholicism, in the constitution of its priestly hierarchy, in the *opus operatum* of its sacraments, and all the superstitious practices with which Catholic devotion persists in overlaying itself. But it would be as superficial as fallacious to find it only in these. The essence of pagan error is the confining of the activity of God to an outward form, and submerging of spirit in matter. There is a taint of paganism in every tendency to materialise and localise religion, to restrain the freedom of the Spirit of God, to leave out of view its transcendence over all contingent creatures and institutions of history. There is something pagan in indifference to the sanctity of the Christian ideal, in an emasculated consciousness of sin and of human responsibility such as is but too common in our days. There is something pagan even in our so-called religious revivals, under whatever name of literary Christianity, neo-Christianity, religion of human suffering, and other forms of mysticism, in which adoration becomes a mere æsthetic luxury. Whenever piety throws overboard the ballast of moral consciousness it gets lost in the fog, and evaporates into poetry.

Over against this error stands the Jewish error of a legalistic and Pharisaic tendency. In it the outward authority of the letter is put in

the place of the inward authority of the Spirit. It conceives of religion and practises it as a contract, God and man apart from one another, and each making his conditions. It not only cuts off Christian mysticism at the root, but puts the law in the place of grace, and salvation by works in the place of salvation by faith. Once admit into the Christian Church this tendency to deny the purely religious and moral notion of faith, and add to the unique condition of a trustful return to the Father any external condition whatever, whether the practice of a form of devotion or the profession of a traditional belief, and the very principle of Christianity is impaired or modified, being tainted with Pharisaism.

Theology may guard itself against the pagan error by *critical symbolism*, which, recognising the historic necessity of rites and formulas, is able always to discern in them the ideal principle of the religion of spirit and truth, and to make it act upon them as a leaven of reform, of progress, of continual ascent toward eternal truth. Against the Jewish error Christian thought may defend itself by *fideism*, that is, by an ever stricter adhesion to the primitive content of the gospel of salvation by faith alone. The religion of the Spirit embodies the living practical synthesis of critical symbolism and fideism, that is, of the moral content and the free character of Christian inspiration.[1]

Two other tendencies are opposed to the religion of the Spirit: they are simply disguised daughters of those already pointed out. One is *traditionalism*, into which the Roman Church is gradually stiffening; the other is *independency*, or the false individualism by which the Protestant churches are crumbling to pieces, their activity evaporating and becoming socially sterile. When the past in all its periods and all forms of its development is apotheosised it is at once set apart from criticism

[1] *Fidéisme*, for which we have no English word, is the word adopted by Dean Sabatier and his school (and especially expounded by his colleague Prof. Ménégoz), as the term for the "religion of the Spirit." See Prof. G. B. Stevens, of Yale, in the *Hibbert Magazine* for April, 1903, on "Auguste Sabatier, and the Paris School of Theology."—*Trans.*

and consequently from every serious attempt at reform; its necessary progress is checked. In vain is the attempt made to-day, following Moehler and Newman, to introduce the idea of evolution into Catholic tradition; it is only a seeming. Tradition, having been declared forever infallible, has become a solid body, no part of which can be denied or given up, and its ever-increasing weight must fatally stifle every new initiative of the Christian spirit. Acting according to the law of affinities, the superstitions of the past cannot but favour the growth of new superstitions in the future. There is no other explanation of the rapid decline down which Roman Catholicism has for two centuries been hastening. The same tendency would bring about the same results in Protestantism itself, if ever it should succeed (as is happily impossible) in constituting itself a system of authority. The sterility of all reactionary Protestant movements is proof and warning of this.

As a matter of fact, Protestantism suffers from the opposite ill. Catholicism fails to recognise the valid rights of the Christian conscience. Protestant individualism too often overlooks a no less important fact of another order—the organic bond between the individual and the species, the child and the family, the man and society. Neither individual life nor individual thought enjoys absolute plenitude. It is an error to suppose that either is independent and sufficient to itself. There is profound truth in the popular adage " One is always somebody's child." Physiology maintains it, history proves it. The Protestant Christian who isolates himself, believing that he can draw all religious truth from his Bible or his individual inspiration, lives and thinks in unreality. His intellectual obstinacy springs from ignorance and keeps him in it. We have need one of another, quite as much from the point of view of the moral life as of material existence. An individual experience is only a part of the total experience of humanity, and apart from this totality it runs the risk either of exaggerating its own value or of being swallowed up in senseless pride or dejected scepticism. This is why the testimony of others, communion with the brethren, are necessary to us.

Only in this social solidarity can the Christian life blossom out, and find at once health and security. An unsocial Christianity is a stunted and sterile Christianity.

The religion of the Spirit, then, must reconcile all that is true in both Catholic and Protestant principles, by stripping both of whatever may be false and narrow in them. It can accomplish this task only by the aid of history and psychology, nursing mothers of a sound theology. The psychology of the Christian consciousness confirms it in the sentiment of its independence and inherent value. History gives it the sense of continuity in the religious and moral development of the entire human race. Faith, that deepest root of the religion of the Spirit, by its own power creates two intuitions: that of liberty, by which the soul possesses and asserts itself, and that of love, by which it gives itself to the whole creation and enters into communion with it. The first gathers up all the powers of the soul and concentrates them upon itself, the other carries it out of itself, and pours it forth upon the world. The first makes it strong to resist all forms of tyranny; the other makes it capable of all sacrifices and disposed to all loyal and legitimate concessions. The former maintains the individual life, the latter cements the life of society. To faith all things are possible; to love all are easy. The religion of the Spirit is compounded of faith and love. To develop and build up these two necessary qualities should be the task of theology.

CHAPTER FIVE

SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY: ITS MATTER AND METHOD

I

The Spirit of Piety and the Scientific Spirit

A RELIGION of authority gives rise to a scholastic theology; by the same necessity the religion of the Spirit seeks to find form and expression in a theology which is increasingly scientific. The autonomy of thought corresponds to the autonomy of the religious consciousness. Each inevitably demands the other.

In bringing criticism to bear upon the historic forms of the past, scientific theology forces religion to throw off those foreign elements which in the course of its evolution it has borrowed, and to assert itself as in essence purely religious and moral. This done, it is the religion of the Spirit. And on the other hand a religion thus pure imposes no external bond upon thought. Solely by moral obligation it binds and consecrates thought to the indefatigable and disinterested search for truth. To seek for truth by the loyal exercise of the intelligence, and pursue after holiness by the energy of an upright will and a purified heart, appear henceforth as the two essential and parallel functions of the religion of the Spirit. If truth is the divine sister of righteousness there is equal piety in the labour which leads to either, or rather both suppose the same moral effort.

Without the slightest doubt, the effort to reconcile the doctrines of authority with modern science, which knows no other method than that of observation and experience, is as the attempt to weld together a clod of clay and an iron bar. This is why all past compromises and attempted conciliations have so miserably ended in shipwreck. Quite

other is the profound affinity between religious and scientific inspiration. They spring from the same source, they tend to the same end, and both manifest the same life of the Spirit. Both are born of a religious love of truth. The spirit of piety adores the truth, even when it does not recognise it; the scientific spirit perhaps seeks for truth without adoring it, but both love it above all else, and devote themselves to it without reserve. They meet and hold communion together in the religion of the truth.

Let us for a moment forget professional scholars and bigots, their hatreds, inconsistencies, and absurdities, the theology of the former and the pretentious oracles of the others. The question that occupies us, let us again repeat, is neither concrete religion nor established science, but the intellectual effort which creates science and the profound sentiment which gives birth to religion, independently of their more or less striking manifestations in everyday life. Can we not feel that in its ideal aspiration, in the heroic labour which it undergoes, the sacrifices it inspires, the triumphs it achieves, and especially in the humility with which, after each victory, genius bows before the eternal mystery, the task of human science is holy, that it is impious to speak evil of it, and that it ascends from our poor earth as a magnificent homage to the God of truth?

Nothing is more striking nor more touching than the kind of piety with which science inspires all great men of learning: Kepler, Descartes, Pascal, Newton, Pasteur. See their awe inspired by each discovery; follow Littré to the last headland of positive science. Why are all of them plunged in solemn contemplation? What mysterious power bows them before the ultimate, and changes their ardent and victorious research into adoration?

From a conquered truth, as from an accomplished duty or sacrifice, some mysterious perfume exhales, which makes fragrant the whole soul life, and gives it over to humility and joy.

In our days much has been said of the religion of science; it has even

been claimed that this religion would do away with all others and reign in their place. This is not true, first, because science is no more the whole of life than thought is the whole soul, and again, because those who speak thus of science speak in the most unreligious way possible. None the less is it true that the object of science is eminently religious, and that the pursuit of science is an integral part of religion. The religion of science is no more safe from superstition and fanaticism than any other religion, and easily turns to idolatry. But even in idolatry religion forces itself into recognition. The true religion of science is not that which deifies ephemeral results or material power, but that which holds research itself to be holy, the steady ascent of the spirit toward the larger light.

While learned men who fail to recognise the religious character of science narrow and restrict the bounds of their horizon, religious men who fear science and will have none of it no less strike a mortal blow at their own faith. They deliberately shut themselves up in a dark prison, where their piety, deprived of light and air, must inevitably waste away and die.

Why then should we permit ourselves to be shut up to the alternative of choosing between an irreligious science and an ignorant or unintelligent religion? So false a dilemma is created only by fanaticism; the fanaticism of those who proscribe religion in the name of science, and that of those who anathematise free research in the name of religion. It disappears at once before a mind free from passion and prejudice, sincerely resolved ever to bring more piety to its scientific work and more science to its piety. The struggle between these two powers of the soul, neither of which can be coerced, makes the agony of the individual soul and the woe of society. Their reconciliation will be the peace and salvation of both.

Science in piety is scientific theology.

II

Conditions on which Theology May Become Scientific

The time has gone by when theology, as a Roman matron her handmaidens, held all other mental disciplines under its sovereign sway. That time will never return unless humanity, decrepit and senile, falls into a second childhood. To-day the situation is entirely reversed, The present question for theology is whether it may achieve a place in the consecrated choir of modern sciences, or whether it will be shut out for want of any common interest with them.

The scientific consciousness of our time recognises, in fact, no specifically sacred science, no science fallen from heaven and not the fruit of man's travail of mind. From its point of view the most transcendent theology, however saturated with mystery, is still a human thing. To take refuge behind a supernatural authority, that it may thus impose itself from without upon the mind, is in its opinion nothing other than gratuitously to cut itself off from all communion with the scientific labour of modern times. That which was once the dread privilege of theology has to-day become its fatal infirmity. The question is no longer of theology being the queen of the other sciences, but whether they will accept her as their sister.

She can be so accepted only on condition of herself becoming a science, distinct from the others of course, as to subject, but similar to them and of like nature with them as to method.

Two conditions are necessary to the constitution of a science: in the first place it must be competent to set apart from the wide domain of the real a well-defined field, large or small, which properly belongs to itself, that is, it must have a positive and definite object of study; in the second place, in its mode of study it must give up the old method of authority and own allegiance to the method of observation and experiment. Thus one after the other all modern sciences have thrown off the yoke of time-honoured authority and constituted themselves anew.

Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, were the great initiators of the new era. Theology must undergo a like revolution if it will take its place as a factor in the encyclopædic organism of human sciences.

The two conditions just stated are inseparable and mutually self-originating. It is because Catholic theology, far from renouncing the method of authority, has become more than ever subject to it, that it is unable to define its particular object. What is a *summa theologica?* If one subtracts from it that which properly belongs to rational philosophy, there is nothing left but an inorganic series of commentaries, classified by rubric, upon mysteries which are declared inaccessible alike to reason and human experience; so that we arrive at the singular and self-contradictory definition of a science whose object is those things which cannot be known. Whence it results that the object of theological science thus conceived is reduced to formulas that must be correctly repeated and obstinately defended, but which rest upon an obscure vacuum, an unknowable reality, whose purely verbal definition it is impossible to verify. How can such formulas be established except by the method of authority? Thus the dogma of the Trinity rests upon the authority of the bishops of Nicæa and Constantinople, who formulated it, and in the scientific order it has precisely the weight of the scientific competency of its authors. If it is canonised and declared intangible and indisputable, it is so by an authority of the same order as that which to-day in France forbids the discussion of the republican form of government. It is politics; it is not science.

This is why the Catholic church is obliged to have a science apart, separate universities, just as it separates the clergy from the laity and religious society from civil. The method of authority so entirely isolates Catholic theology from the general scientific movement that it is futile to enter into discussion with it, and generally it is set aside by mere preterition.

Entirely different is the history of Protestant theology. Finding a place in national universities by the same title as other humane disci-

plines, it has necessarily followed their progressive evolution, and like them has gradually freed itself from the method of authority, and taken possession of the restricted but positive domain which is its own. Schleiermacher, who at the beginning of the last century was the initiator of the new theology, assigned to it the religious phenomenon as its object of study; and more especially the Christian phenomenon, which is only a higher form of the other; at the same time he laid upon it the method of psychological and historical observation. Religious facts, indeed, belong to the domain of consciousness; they can be grasped, verified, and described only by the observation of the religious psychologist or by the historic exegesis of documents in which the religious consciousness of the past has left its imprint. This is why the accurate delimitation of the object of theology brings in its train the substitution of the method of observation and experiment for the old method of authority. One had lost all the ground that the other is gaining, and the measure of the progress of the new method during the century is the measure of the scientific character of the new theology.

But it will still be long before the habits of the method of authority entirely disappear from theology. Far too frequently in discussions between theologians we meet forms of reasoning which bear its indelible mark. Such are the arguments drawn from practical utility, or religious fear. We cite two examples.

The difficulties raised by the question of the authenticity of St. John's Gospel are well known. It is a problem of literary history, and should be discussed solely according to the strict method elsewhere used by literary history. How many religious critics have thought to supplement the notorious insufficiency of the traditional proofs by insisting that if this gospel is not the immediate work of the apostle, the son of Zebedee, the Christian religion is undermined! And it is by virtue of such reasoning that they hope to make the apostolicity of this writing an article of faith for the Christian conscience! It is almost as if a chemist should undertake to establish a theory as to the origin of quinine

upon the fact that the doctors find it useful for the cure of fever. Science demands greater candour. There are in history certain things which one should be in a condition to affirm; there are also legendary things which must be recognised as such, and doubtful matters concerning which one must be willing to be in doubt until new light shines. We may indeed bring down the scales by throwing in some extrinsic matter, but that both falsifies the weight and shows a lack of scientific probity. If it is not historically demonstrated that the Fourth Gospel is by the Apostle John, no extra-historical reasoning will make it so.

Another example: A certain school of theology which considers itself very much emancipated hopes to deduce the dogma of the divinity of Christ from the fact of his pre-existence, although there is no necessary connection between the notions of pre-existence and divinity, as is proved by Origen's theory of the pre-existence of human souls. And to command acceptance of the fact of the pre-existence of Jesus of Nazareth they add, as was urged concerning the Gospel of St. John, that this is the keystone of the arch of the Christian religion, and that if it should be lost to dogmatics, the Christian faith would go with it. Thus they cut short the scientific study of the progressive formation and development of the notion of pre-existence among the Jews and early Christians, and by a sort of authoritative fiat they give the lie to the scientific character of theology. Theology cannot be a true science until it has been freed from these old tatters of a method which it professes to have abandoned.

The proper object of theology is the study of the religious phenomenon in general and the Christian phenomenon in particular; this is that section of reality which it is the duty of theology to study and make known to others. For however mysterious may be their first cause, and however complex may appear their manifestation, religious phenomena are psychological facts, which everyone discovers first in himself and then in the past. Theology therefore has two sources—psychology and history, and their union must constitute its entire method of observa-

tion, direct and indirect. History is psychology going back to the past as far and as fully as the documents permit; psychology is history carried down to the present moment and into the personal experience of the thinker. There is therefore no compromising dualism in the theological method. The more sincerely the method is applied the more serious will be its results. If mental probity is a duty in every order of research, it seems to be more imperatively so in the religious order, in which illusions, being more easy, call for the greater vigilance and disinterestedness. The theologian, knowing no sources of information beyond psychology and history, ought to be the most clear-sighted of psychologists and the most rigorous of critics. He can make his task a scientific work only on these two conditions.

III

The Degree of Objectivity in Religious and Christian Experience

An invincible character of subjectivity is inherent in all human sciences, because all are in two respects dependent upon the forms of the sensitive faculty and the constitution of the mind. Mathematics is no exception, notwithstanding the realm of pure evidence in which it moves, for if from the formal point of view it is limited to the application of the logical principle of identity, A = A, from the material point of view it operates only upon the purely relative idea of size or quantity, and is based upon the notion of space to which we attain by means of abstraction. That which makes the objectivity of the natural sciences is, therefore, not that they find their object outside of the knowledge of it which we already possess, it is simply the unescapable necessity of the laws and conditions which determine knowledge. With regard to these laws and conditions the will of the thinking subject is powerless. He can make an abstraction of them, and the importance of the abstraction in each science remains exactly that of the objectivity of which the science may boast.

But moral sciences, and theology in particular, are subjective to a still higher degree. In fact the very object of their study, that is, the moral and religious life, is the creation of the free determinations of the Me, so that without these determinations of the will moral and religious morality would not even manifest itself to the conscience, and would awaken in us no image nor any idea. What is moral good, virtue, to him whose conscience imposes no obligation upon the will? What is God to him who is totally deprived of the religious sentiment, that is, of the sense of an inner relation with God? Now it is certain that the free will of the subject intervening here, it depends upon the subject whether the religious and moral quality of the life of the spirit is more or less clearly felt and perceived by the conscience. Therefore moral sciences are doubly subjective as compared with physical sciences.

And yet, the law according to which religious and moral phenomena become realised none the less ends in a sort of objectivity which it is necessary to define. The objectivity of the physical sciences is founded, as we have just seen, upon the absolute and constraining necessity imposed upon natural laws by the principle of causality which constitutes them. The moral law has doubtless not the same character, but it is subject to another sort of necessity, which may be described by Kant's expression, *Categorical imperative.* Moral obligation makes appeal to the decision of the Me, and consequently treasures and respects it; but on the other hand, is it not absolute in so far as it may prescribe and prephesy that *which ought to be?* Are not the idea of life and the idea of the good identical? If the law of duty is the immanent law of the life of the spirit, if outside of it life is overwhelmed and lost in animality, if the apostle's word is true, " The wages of sin is death "; if humanity makes no progress, fails to realise its true being or to advance toward its ideal, except by obedience; if necessity is laid upon individuals as upon nations either to make moral growth or become extinct; if this law commands universal evolution, marking its line—does it not become evident that on this side the law of duty shares in the objectivity of cosmic

laws themselves, appearing as highest and most sovereign among them all?

Experience confirms this deduction. Morals and religion, issuing from the individualistic sphere of consciousness, become historic potencies, and with philosophy and science are the great creative potencies of civilisation, and the revelatory signs of the true nature of the human spirit. That historic objectivity which observation may grasp may at least not be denied them, and being granted, moral and religious science has at least an equal dignity with philosophy and history, in which it at the same time participates. Theology is in fact historical by the material upon which it works, and philosophical by the method according to which it is constructed.

It is a grave error to imagine, as is sometimes said, that scientific theology has for the object and material of its study only the religious or moral phenomena which take place in the individual conscience, and that it is consequently useless, because there is no good reason for supposing purely individual phenomena to be anything else than the dreams or illusions of the subject who experiences them. The moral and religious life is not only individual, it is collective. It is pre-eminently a social and human fact. It is with the moral as with the physical individual. However independent may be its life, it can develop only in the bosom of the family or the race. It is a drop of water in a river, a link in a chain. In its consciousness are individual phenomena ephemeral as a dream, no doubt, or as a caprice or a perverse passion, but there are also movements which, being repeated from end to end of the human chain, are thus prolonged; there are natural instincts which burst into flower and show their true importance only in the life of the entire species. Just as, in the physical order, the love of one sex for the other, instead of appearing to be an individual fugitive caprice, is the invincible power which preserves and propagates the species, so moral and religious inspiration is the mysterious breath which lifts up the human soul and from generation to generation carries man forward toward humanity.

It is impossible to insist too much upon the organic and indissoluble bond which thus attaches individual experience to historic and collective experience. Scientific theology considers them in their essential unity, and the object of its study lacks neither consistency nor greatness. Its problem is to formulate the theory of the religious and moral life of all humanity.

This programme cannot as yet be entirely filled. The religious archives of the human race have not yet been thoroughly explored, nor is religious psychology as yet sufficiently advanced. The science of religion must therefore be progressive; in common with the other sciences it will gain a new character which will earn for it credit in place of disdain. But if its pathway is undefined its direction is at least marked by two fixed points which experience has furnished. The first is the religious consciousness of savage and primitive man; the second is the religious consciousness of Jesus Christ, which has become the regulating principle of the Christian consciousness of civilised peoples.

To explain the ascending movement by which humanity has passed from one point to the other, to reveal the basis and essence of the Christian consciousness and explain its necessary relations with human consciousness in general and with modern culture in particular, this is the task with which modern theology is now confronted, and which it may undertake with some hope of success. The Christian consciousness is not merely an accidental form or part of the general religious consciousness of humanity, it is a necessary and dominant part of it, to which all the others tend as to their ideal, and in which alone they find their explanation and perfecting. It is with the final term of this evolution as with the summit of a mountain; the summit is a part of the mountain, but it dominates all the other parts in their ascending stages from the depths of the valley to itself, and by that fact it embraces them all and assigns to each its place and rank in the whole.

The line of evolution of all peoples as they press toward the realisation of the true humanity necessarily passes by way of Christianity.

This is why scientific theology cannot be anything else than Christian theology.

IV

Religion and Theology

It is impossible to grasp religious or moral experience in its pure and isolated condition. It is with it as with life, which nowhere and never manifests itself without matter, although neither its principle nor its power resides in matter. So the religious life cannot exist without belief, although belief is neither its principle nor its source. For this reason in these days men almost invariably, and with reason, distinguish between religion and theology.

This distinction, which forces itself upon the religious consciousness, implies at the outset two elements in piety. The pious emotion, by which I mean the need, the desire, and the impulse which disquiet the entire Me and inclines it toward God, is always accompanied by an intuition, arising from an ideal picture representing to consciousness the object which produces this kind of emotion. In its turn and under the influence of reflection this image is changed, in idea, into doctrine and dogma. Such is the psychological genesis of the religious phenomenon. Pure, abstract logic says that one must know before he can adore, historical psychology shows that in the first instance one desires, prays, adores, and thus comes to know, and that the definition of the object of adoration is drawn from the worship offered to it and the benefits expected from it. If, as it would be the part of wisdom to do, we restrict the term faith to the moral act which inclines the soul toward God, we must say, not that belief, an essentially intellectual act, is the cause of faith, but that it is faith which produces belief. In the last analysis, the latter is simply the ideal expression of the former.

It is indeed true that in its turn belief, being preached, provokes faith, that is to say, the religious life; that there is a strong action and reaction between the two during their whole subsequent development. But

we must be wary here; the belief which is brought to me from without by one of my brethren awakens the religious life in me only as it finds in me a latent need, a predisposition to faith. Otherwise it remains sterile, and I may even accept it unreservedly without by that becoming religious. Many so-called conversions are only parrot conversions.

God alone is the author of life. It is by good right that Christians say that faith, the earliest manifestation of the life of the soul, comes from the immanent action of God. Man, therefore, receives life, but makes his own belief. And this fact establishes a new and most important difference between the life of faith and the form of belief.

Let us follow it still farther. The propagation of life is not an individual act; it is a social act. The individual does not produce himself, he is produced in a society. An absolute and abstract individualism is false and sterile. Physiology denies it in the physical order, psychology in the moral and religious order. To propose to draw life from one's self, like certain philosophers and theologians who hope to deduce their religious faith from a theoretical demonstration, is a dangerous delusion, an idealism which will soon leave them discouraged, sceptical, and powerless. We must place ourselves in the actuality of life. That which takes place for the physical life is precisely repeated in the animal life. The source of an individual's life is not in himself, but in society. The historic source of the religious life is in the religious society.

Without doubt the Spirit of God is its author. But the Spirit does not work by chance, accidentally and from without. The Spirit of life is incarnate and immanent in the religious society which it is continually creating and renewing. Assuredly it blows where it will, but if we may so speak no wind blows apart from the atmosphere; none comes from the azure realms of ether. The wind is found in the agitation of molecules of the air; so the mysterious action of the Spirit of God is found in the agitation of the spirits of men. Thence the vital bond of solidarity which unites the religious man to religious society, the Chris-

tian to Christian society. The saying of Cyprian, which Calvin emphatically made his own, is true: "The Church is the mother of all of whom God is the Father." [1] And this is said, not to limit or deny the liberty of God or of man, but to show the organic conditions in which both liberties are invariably exercised.

Such is the order of life; quite other is the order of belief. God gives the first; he does not command the second; but he has bestowed upon man the faculties of imagination and intelligence that he may note the experiences of life, interpret and express them. Without the slightest doubt thoughts come from the heart and ideas are born of experience, but this is by an intellectual elaboration whose character is always and necessarily subjective and contingent. It is with religious ideas as with all others; we cannot cite a single one which came down ready-made from heaven, none which was not formed in a human brain, none whose genesis we cannot trace, and its development through generations. The bread of the spirit has its price equally with that of the body. Whence ensues this consequence: hereditary conceptions which were once individual conceptions are never absolute and may always be indefinitely modified by the travail of mind which created them.

Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.

If the religious life implies faith, belief implies theology. In the first the soul is essentially receptive, in the other it is active and productive. And because the elaboration of doctrine is a work of intellectual activity it implies the responsibility of the theologian. Here, as in every other field of labour, man reaps what he has sown. To speak with the apostle, one man brings to this building gold, silver, excellent materials, another brings wood or stubble. The fire of time tests the value of the work of both.[2]

Very different and even morally contradictory appear therefore the attitudes of the believer and the theologian. When, as in the case of the

[1] Appendix XCIV.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

theologian, the same man is obliged to maintain both attitudes, how shall he reconcile them? From God, through the religious society in which he caused me to be born, I receive life, and that I may receive it I must be humble and docile; but my personal thought once thus aroused, I necessarily become the judge of the teaching I have received. Can I stand at the same time in the place of catechumen and critic; can I at once feel the dependence of my individual consciousness upon the collective consciousness apart from which my life must dwindle and die, and at the same time recognise the autonomy of my thought, without which I am no longer I, and cannot even have a personal faith? This problem is the problem of life. I escape from the tyranny of the Church by the intellectual and moral vigour by which I can distinguish between the work of God and the work of men in the very tradition of the Church itself; and I escape from the dangers of an individualism rooted in nothing, by the humility which reminds me that here below I am at school to others, while at the same time I must be the master of myself.

In fact, both these attitudes are imposed upon me by the needs of my nature. Each is justified by the other, and both make progress by mutual conflict. The things that I learn at the school of the past serve to fortify my own personality, and the stronger it grows, the more imperative becomes its duty to find its own place in the social order, and discover in this order its function and employment. To individualise in myself the faith of my fathers, while freeing it from all that was erroneous in that faith, to socialise my personal faith by freeing it from all egotism and gaining for it an ever clearer consciousness of being rooted in the past, and having much in common with the faith of the society of the present, this is my double task, the double rhythm of my inward life, by which I love both the tradition which compels me and the inward liberty which makes my dignity.

To remain loyal to the religious tradition of the past, to enhance its dignity in the present and carry it on into the future, this is the mission of the theologian.

V

The Matter, Function, and Method of Theology

THEOLOGY is in no sense a speculative science. It is an error to confound it with metaphysics. In the psychological fact of religion its basis is in experience; and in dogma or traditional theology it finds its matter formulated by history. Schleiermacher was not without reason in classing it among historic disciplines. In our opinion it belongs rather to sociology; for religion, the object of its study, is certainly, side by side with language, the most important social fact which sociology can investigate. The sociological character and importance of theology will in the future appear and assert itself with ever greater evidence.

Dogmas, doctrines, received belief, are nothing else than the intellectual expression of the common religious consciousness in a given society. By dogmas and doctrines this consciousness manifests its content and explains to itself its origin and reason for being. No doubt it finds expression and means of making itself known under still other forms; for example, in the forms of worship, and in the institutions and customs to which it gives rise. Theology may not fail to take account of these. But after all, in nothing is the religious consciousness more directly revealed, with more precision and clearness, than in dogma. In what manner, according to what laws, with what degree of legitimacy, does the immediate sentiment of piety which comes from God find intellectual expression in figures, in notions, in doctrines? To answer this question, to observe this transition from sentiment to idea, and to appreciate in how far the idea is the more or less just and adequate expression of the sentiment, is the proper task of scientific theology. Thus dogma is necessarily the matter of its study, the tie by which it is bound to the social religious tradition, and labours to give it even better and higher form. However radical and severe it may be in criticising the formulas of the past, in the end it is always positive,

for by the very act of setting the religious sentiment free from the worn-out wrappings in which it suffers, misconceived and paralysed, it restores it to inexhaustible vigour and creative power.

Thence we derive the religious and social function of theology. This function is twofold. It is its duty first to make dogmas intelligible, and second, to make them respectable. It succeeds in both in proportion as it discovers the laws of their birth and development, shows that they were originally rooted in piety itself, teaches us to distinguish between the sentiment that inspired them and the intellectual elements of which they were formed. History at once justifies and condemns dogmas. It justifies the form they took on in the past by the historic necessity that religion shall always adapt itself to its time and its environment. But times and environments change; the intellectual elements of belief grow old from age to age; they need therefore to be renewed, and the truth is that, notwithstanding the most obstinate resistance of religious conservatism, they are continually renewed. Thus the criticism of dogmas goes on side by side with their justification. Tracing out their transformations in history, theology forces them to lay aside such elements as are foreign to religion itself, and notions which though once doubtless alive are now dead through disuse. History is the ever-sliding sieve of human ideas, or rather, if another comparison may be permitted, it is a stream whose waters, continually filtered by their passage through successive layers of sand, discharge in each the impurities which they took from that preceding and thus slowly attain an ever greater degree of limpidity.

But the critical history of dogma is only a preface to the work of theology. From what has been it must bring forth what ought to be. In faith, in that inward piety whence it draws its origin, theology finds also an ideal which it is its mission unwearingly to pursue. Essentially a reforming agency, it comes to the succour of the religious consciousness in all the crises through which the latter is called to pass. It is not enough that theology shall make clear the senility of the old forms of

religion; its task is to create for it new forms, and bring the gospel of Christ into more immediate contact with the consciences of men and of modern society; to make it the better understood, that it may be the more readily accepted. Thus it becomes a beneficent mediator between the life-principle of Christianity and the needs and requirements of the present time. For those elements of traditional belief which have become outworn and unassimilable, it substitutes new intellectual elements, philosophical and scientific notions drawn from culture already acquired. Thus it results that harmony is restored between that which it would be fatal not to retain of the traditions of the past, and that which it would be fatal also not to receive with joy and confidence, of the conquests of the present and the future.

Unquestionably, harmony thus obtained can be neither absolute nor final. All is movement in us and around us. It is the part of theology simply to respond loyally and efficaciously to the necessities of the present hour. It must remain progressive, like all other sciences, which day by day do a positive without ever doing a completed work. To interpret the life of dogma in the past, and renew it continually in the present and the future, such is the double function of theology.

To accomplish this task theology has at its disposition three instruments: one historical, Holy Scripture; one philosophical, the scientific mind with its accepted methods; and one of religious discernment, or Christian experience and the instinctive sense created by it.

Holy Scripture, upon which Christian piety can never cease to feed without ceasing to be itself, is no longer a dogmatic authority. There can therefore be no question of borrowing directly from it and imposing upon modern theology any formula or thesis properly so called. There are *theologoumena* in Scripture, but these first elements of the intellectual explanation of the Christian principle belong to the time, and the culture of the time, when the biblical books were written. They must be left there, and it is an intolerable anachronism to seek to transport them absolutely into our own time.

But Scripture is none the less a historic document by whose means we can go back to the first springs of Christianity; it is none the less the necessary starting point of all religious and dogmatic development since that time. It is the first tradition, if any choose to call it so. Having preceded all forms of later tradition, it is the historic norm by which these may and should be controlled, that we may know to what degree they adhere to or depart from the primitive essence of Christianity. All dogmas come from Scripture by way of interpretation; all go back to it as their original source and warrant. They can be explained only by it, and the history of each dogma would be incomplete, and consequently unintelligible, if it did not begin by showing the germ of the dogma in the teaching of the Bible. Only thus can we accurately discern what new elements successive ages and philosophies have added to it. Theology is not bound under the yoke of biblical conceptions, but it is clear that no new dogmatic expression would be legitimately Christian if it contradicted the spirit of the Bible and were bound by no tie to primitive Christian experience, of which the Bible is the authentic document. The Bible is not an authority for theology, but it will ever be an indispensable means of historic explanation and religious control of theology.

In the second place we have to confront the dogmas and beliefs of the past with the scientific spirit and the religious consciousness which centuries of culture and reflection have formed in the modern man. Here in reality begins the theological task, which consists in nothing else than this necessary comparison, with a loyal effort to bring out all its teachings. Every doctrinal formula is an exercise and act of thought. This exercise and act are amenable to the laws and conditions which make thought accurate and true. First are the laws of logic. It is certain that a doctrine involving a flagrant contradiction cannot maintain itself to the mind, that such contradiction undermines it and compels its reconstruction. The history of all dogmas more than amply demonstrates this. But logical laws are merely the formal conditions of

thought. Its substance is experimental knowledge of the universe gained by astronomy, geology, chemistry, physiology; of the history of humanity, its origin and evolution, gained by historical criticism, and of the mental life of man, gained from psychology. When we measure the distance which from all these points of view lies between our whole conception of things and that of the ancients, or even that of the Middle Ages; when we recognise the necessary dependence of the religious notions of the past upon the conception then dominant, we perceive that it will no longer suffice for theology to make a few corrections of detail in the old dogmatic, but that its duty is to proceed deliberately to reconstruct the entire edifice in the style of the present.

The intellectual form of a doctrine is derived from the scientific mind, but what makes a doctrine religious and Christian is the religious and Christian experience which explains and interprets it. This element of moral order is the common basis of doctrine, both old and new. Any doctrine which is not rooted in this common basis is by that very fact outside of the Christian religion. Therefore, side by side with the scientific spirit necessary to the theologian is this personal experience with which his entire thought, his entire life, must be inwardly animated. He can be a Christian thinker only on this condition.

I am not ignorant of the fact that to souls who are strangers to this inner life the words *Christian experience* represent only something vague and intangible. St. Paul was right when he said that the psychical or carnal man cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit of God. The reproach that this is all mysticism cannot be turned aside. The theologian must accept it resolutely and make of it, certainly not a title to glory, but the very reason for his existence and work. Far from being vague and obscure, Christian experience, to everyone who is conscious of it, is something morally very clear, accurately determined, which each finds, not only in himself, but in everyone whose consciousness has been awakened to the same life. He finds it in the personal life of every Christian, great and small, illustrious and obscure, in every age; in the

collective soul of all Christendom. This experience first of all took place in the consciousness of Jesus Christ, and from him has been shed abroad in every conscience which has a sense both of spiritual misery and of reconciliation with the Father by faith in the good news of his infinite love. This wholly religious and moral content of the filial consciousness of Christ constitutes and determines what is called in the language of Christianity the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of God in the history of humanity. This Spirit imposes no definite doctrinal formula; it is a religious sense, a faculty of discernment inherent in Christian faith, enabling it accurately to appreciate and judge between all that in the present or the past is of its permanent essence, and all that is foreign or accessory to it. Outside of this inspiration the work of theology is as vain for the progress of religion itself as for the science of religion.

Once again we touch the vital and substantial basis of Christianity. Here is the starting point of all the doctrines which theology may develop. In this principle they find their unity and become an organism. Of this organism we have now to trace the broad outlines.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ORGANISATION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

I

Unity; Its Organising Principle

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, under the influence of supernaturalistic rationalism, a curious definition of Protestantism emerged. Aided by the Aristotelian categories of matter and form which had been cultivated since the Middle Ages, men began to talk of a material principle (*principium salutis*) and a formal principle (*principium cog-*

noscendi). The material principle of Protestant doctrine was the doctrine of justification by faith, and its formal principle, the divine authority of Holy Scripture. This distinction was found to be so felicitous and convenient that it has been current ever since in lecture courses and manuals of theology.

Yet its late appearance might well have laid it open to suspicion, and still more so the variety of explanations which it has called forth, and which have only served to make it the more obscure. In the first place, is it not strange that we should be obliged to base a religious system upon two irreducible principles? Is it possible to give equal importance and religious value to a book and its contents, to the gospel of salvation brought by Christ and the method or instrument by which, historically, we have received it? One of two things must be the case: either the doctrine of justification by faith is proclaimed by the Protestant Church as the sole legitimate interpretation of Scripture, and in that case the interpretation of Scripture is fixed once for all by this Church, and is binding upon the conscience, and we are in very Catholicism; or else, the authority of Scripture remaining, its interpretation is still free, and in that case, as the text is capable of various interpretations, at least in certain parts, the authority of the Bible may be turned against the dogma of justification by faith. In either case Protestantism breaks down.

There is another danger. It is easy for abstract and simplistic logic to make the truth of the gospel of salvation depend upon the divine authority of Scripture. The Bible then becomes the foundation of the doctrine, and the authority of the book becomes the true and highest object of faith; which leads to a fatal corruption and complete misapprehension of the purely moral and religious nature of faith. This is the fundamental weakness of Protestant orthodoxy and the intellectualism which is its mark. Shall the faith which saves depend upon a theoretical demonstration—which indeed it is impossible to furnish—that the Bible is the very work of God? May I not receive the good

news of divine pardon until I shall have been convinced of the divine infallibility of the books which announce it? Is it possible to maintain the contention that faith in the divinity of the Bible must be the necessary preliminary and the basis of all the Christian's religious notions, his assurance of salvation, his hope, and the communion of his soul with God? Is not this a reversal of things, and does it not demand that the nature of faith shall have changed since the time when there was as yet no New Testament, and since the Reformation, when Luther declared that Scripture is the servant, not the Master, and hesitated not to appeal from the servant to the Master in every place where Scripture seemed to him not to render faithfully the Master's word and thought?

We rightfully value the Bible, because it is a precious and providential means of making and keeping objective to piety the person and work of Christ in history. But for how many souls in primitive times was this office, which the Bible now renders to us, filled by the preaching of missionaries, and since that time by the continuous witness of the Church! How many souls have been saved by the gospel without the Scriptures! By definition, a means cannot be an absolute thing; it is a relation between a principle and its practical action. Neither the Bible nor the Church is a principle or a first cause; history shows that on the contrary these are consequences and effects. The Bible is at once the work of the Church and the fruit of the preaching of the gospel. It follows that, far from being that which authenticates and guarantees the truth of the gospel, it is from the gospel that both Bible and Church draw their original existence and present dignity.

So much as to piety. As to doctrinal construction, to posit at its basis two distinct principles such as these is to introduce into its foundation a cause of disorganisation and incoherence. Placed upon the same level as the gospel of salvation, the dogma of the authority of Scripture necessarily takes the first place in theology. Henceforth theology begins, as may be seen in all treatises of dogmatic orthodoxy, by a chapter on *bibliology*, in which the authority and origin of the sacred volume

are established before any explanation of its contents is entered upon. On the one hand, dogmatic theology is held to resolve questions which belong solely to history and criticism, and on the other, the Bible having thus been treated of as the dogmatic foundation of all the rest, it is taken up again in the chapter on the Church, as a means of grace offered to piety. The edifice is thus constructed in the same style as Catholic theology and upon its very plan, with this difference: that the place held by the Church in one is taken by the Bible in the other. But in both cases the building totters to its fall, because in the last analysis it rests upon a *petitio principii*.

Therefore we must give up finally and without regret this dualistic conception of the Christian religion. It is even more false than embarrassing. It reverses and misapprehends the psychological and historical processes of the religious life and the true genesis of the doctrine. As the object of theology is to explain the life of piety, it ought to be the ideal reflection of piety, and consequently it should find in life itself the organising principle of doctrine. From the point of view of experience this principle can be nothing other than the Christian consciousness. By this we mean, to use a modern expression, the state of soul, the fundamental religious purpose of the Christian, with the series of inward phenomena which constitute and of outward manifestations which reveal this purpose. This state of soul is essentially the same in individual Christians of all times, in the collective life of the Church, in the initial consciousness of the Christ, the originator and norm of all the others.

To strip this common and permanent basis of the accidental forms which often hide it will be to discover and posit the principle whence we deduce the unity of doctrine and its entire inner organism.

II

Analysis of the Christian Consciousness

The Christian consciousness is constituted by the vital antithesis of two opposing sentiments; the sense of fatal separation from God, and the sense of blessed reconciliation with him. The reciprocal passage from one to the other is the constant activity, the very life, of the Christian consciousness. The first of these sentiments represents its negative, the second its positive moment. In the first, the important thing is the deeply rooted sense of the misery and slavery of sin; in the other the dominant fact is the sense of the love of God, the infinite mercy of the Father. The passage from one to the other is made by repentance, which is the judgment pronounced by ourselves upon ourselves and our past, and by faith, which is trust in God alone, this trust naturally becoming the hope of eternal life. This interior conversion, in the expressive language of Scripture, is the passage from darkness to light, from death to life; and it is the religious consciousness of Christ which, becoming ours, works in us this change, which is a true moral resurrection.

Is not this state of consciousness a delusion? Certain mystics and Christian pietists may make it seem so, by their way of looking upon conversion as the entrance upon a state of moral quietude by a regeneration which they imagine to be final and perfect.

No, the Christian consciousness is not a resting-place in a beatific state in which is no remnant of wretchedness, no memory of the past. The relation between the sense of sin and that of pardon and the new life is quite otherwise complex. In reality, these two sentiments are not successive, but simultaneous, and, as it were, continually present in one another; they condition one another, intensify one another, are reciprocally developed, so that neither is truly itself without the other. Thus the sense of sin reappears, in the joy of pardon, under the form of a profound feeling of humility, which binds the Christian more closely than ever to the common misery of his fellow men, forces upon him

a deeper sense of his entire solidarity with them, and impels him to take his part in their unceasing struggle, not deeming himself better than they. In like manner the sense of the love of God is already active in the sense of sin, awakening repentance and faith and giving rise to an ethical hope.

Thus both sentiments persist and should persist in the Christian consciousness, ever reacting upon one another. The sense of sin is the more deeply felt in the soul which has known the love of God, and the love of God is the more appreciated by the soul which is humiliated and grieved over its incurable wretchedness. The Christian consciousness is therefore not a state of repose; on the contrary it is a constant oscillation of the soul between the two poles of its life, a moral exercise of self-examination and self-judgment, of repentance and faith, by which the moral life is deepened and extended in every direction, and we become ever more acutely aware of the shallows of our nature, while rising ever higher upon the high places of consciousness. Is it not in fact true that the more the conscience becomes pure and high the more sensitive it is, and that it is the saints who sincerely deem themselves the worst of men? And it is only those who are still living in the moral unconsciousness of a higher animality who feel evil neither in themselves nor outside of themselves, or who, feeling it, are indifferent to it.

Let us then put away the idea that the Christian consciousness isolates the Christian, separates him from the rest of mankind, or sequesters him from the solidarity of the common destiny. Quite the contrary, the Christian consciousness is not essentially different from the moral consciousness; both in different degrees are the work of the same Spirit of God in the soul of man. The first is the deepening and broadening of the second. The Christian, then, remains in the sphere of humanity. He lives in the same conditions, but with new resources; he fights the same battles, but with faith that victory is possible and in hope of obtaining it.

The Spirit of God is power, action, an inward fire. The impulse

which upbears the soul, and not the result attained, determines the value of its spiritual life. Thus it is impossible to stop at the simple antithesis between the sense of sin and redemption, separation from God and reconciliation with him. Analysing once again the sense of sin and the state of rebellion against God, we quickly discover that here too is a duality of causes. Behind the will which makes the evil we feel the nature which inspires and makes it inevitable. Repentance, therefore, does not suffice; the new birth is farther necessary, the birth of the man of the Spirit in the bosom of the natural man, that is to say, the transformation of the original nature, by which it gradually gives place to a new nature.

In like manner, behind the moral conflict which sin institutes between man and God, there is another and a metaphysical cause separating them and setting them in opposition to one another, that is, the chasm which opens for the religious consciousness between the finite and the infinite, the ephemeral and the eternal, the weak creature of accident and the universal being. Now it is impossible to deny that this new antithesis attacks the foundation of the Christian consciousness and threatens sometimes to overwhelm it. Thenceforth, instead of two terms we have three, which superimpose themselves in consciousness, and form, as it were, steps of the ladder of life, each corresponding to an advance step in the religious consciousness. At the foot is the sense of the metaphysical disproportion between man and God. On the second step is the sense of a flagrant conflict between sinful man and the just and holy God. On the third, the moral conflict is appeased and the metaphysical chasm is filled by the revelation of the infinite love by which God unites himself to man, becomes immanent in his weak being, and by that act raises him up and makes him live in God.

Physiology teaches us that the human organism, after having passed through all forms of life, retains in its structure the marks of all these anterior forms. In the same way, at the depths of Christian consciousness there is something of all the phases through which humanity has

passed, before attaining to that term of moral and religious development in which the very idea of religion, that is, of the perfect union of the divine and the human in Jesus Christ, becomes realised and perfected. This entire evolution, taking place in the Christian consciousness, it is the duty of theology to explain, and by explaining to produce. This is why history in its turn ought to confirm and extend the conclusions of psychology.

III

The Three Degrees of Religious Evolution

Man has only three means of coming into association with his fellows or his gods—interest, law, and love. In social life he always obeys one of these three motives.

Each of them, being founded upon the very nature of the human being, is legitimate in its time and order, and persists in the entire succession, and until the completion of individual and social development. But one or another predominates in the divers phases of this development and characterises them. Thus the reign of the instinct of self-preservation corresponds with the life of sensation, needs, and appetites, which is first developed in the child and in humanity. Little by little emerges the idea of a law which ought to rule these tumultuous desires and appetites, and of a pact or covenant with equal and reciprocal obligations, to pacify and regulate the relations of men between themselves. This law and contract find their basis and consecration in the idea of justice. But this contract relation cannot be separated from the idea of force, for it seeks in force the highest sanction of obligation and the maintenance of the contract, which in the last analysis simply represents an equilibrium of often opposed interests. Men face one another in opposition. They can be really united and unified only in love. At the highest point of the mental life two disinterested activities of the spirit blossom and bear fruit: the search for truth, loved and pursued for its own sake—and this search is the full enfranchisement of

reason—and corresponding to it in the practical order, the gift of one's self, the faculty of finding one's self in others, and the pursuit of the universal and highest good, without mental reservation; and this aspiration of love is the full expansion of the life of the heart. Thus the life of the Spirit is fulfilled in that mysterious law by which it finds itself ever higher and richer the more entirely it gives and sacrifices itself; and this is the high reconciliation of the principles of individualism and socialism, which in the lower grades of life are irreconcilably hostile.

Properly understood, religion is only a social bond between man and the superior powers upon whom he feels his own existence to depend. Necessarily, therefore, the religious sentiment, as soon as it appears, manifests itself under one of these three forms, and in the very order which has just been described. We have the religion of interest, the religion of law, the religion of love, or rather an indefinite number of mixtures of these three types, which can be absolutely distinguished only by abstract thought. This the history of religion shows, by the course and the more important phases of its development.

In the beginning, what does the uncivilised man do who believes himself to be surrounded and dominated by mysterious powers, spirits, or demons, from which he believes that he has equally everything to fear and everything to hope? He seeks either to win them as auxiliaries, or to protect himself against their ill-will. Formulas of magic, incantation, and gifts offered under the forms of sacrifice, serve him to command the will of the god or to secure its good graces. What then is the religious relation in this first degree, if not the relation of interest or selfishness between two unequal powers? The man of sensation is above all things impressed by strength, and among his gods, it is their force which is the object of his adoration. The Homeric Zeus is the first among gods only because by himself alone he is physically stronger than all the others together.

But man tends to escape from the arbitrary and capricious mani-

festations of dreaded occult powers, and he succeeds on the day when by the very opposition and respect of reciprocal interests he rises to the idea of a compact, a law, and as a result, at the notion of justice. This idea of justice commands the divinity as well as man; the god and his adorer are equally held to obey the law that intervenes between them. Furthermore, God being always the ideal of man, the will of a righteous God must itself be the law of righteousness, and to establish a favourable bond, a blessed harmony between God and man, the latter, renouncing magic and self-interested sacrifices, has only to lift up to him pure hands, and to fulfil his law; that is to say, his will. Thus morality enters religion and transforms the religious relation. That which man now adores is force subjected to the law of righteousness. The strong God, אל, has become the holy God, the God of the compact, the avenger of violated law, יהוה.

But in this second degree a far more tragic contradiction appears in the religious consciousness, and constrains it to rise still higher, and undergo a last transformation. In the religions of nature man trembled before the felt disproportion of strength between the divine beings and himself. Now he trembles for another reason. When he has violated the law of righteousness he feels the shudders of remorse, the terror of that condemnation which awaits him at the tribunal of the judge who cannot be deceived. The moral man becomes the prey of a painful and humiliating experience; he ought to do right and he does wrong. The generous impulse which upbears him toward the ideal which he has conceived seems to have no other effect than to make him feel how heavy and invincible are the chains which weigh him down. This is what the Christian consciousness calls the sense of sin, which not only separates the bad man from the holy God, but puts the two in tragic conflict, making the man a guilty rebel against him whose eye is too pure to behold iniquity without destroying it.

In the early stages, the man given over to the double sentiment of his weakness and the unlimited power of God felt himself to be separated

from him by a sort of metaphysical abyss, into which he vainly cast all the imaginations of his fancy without filling it up, and which seemed to grow deeper the more he reflected upon it. This is the incommensurable antithesis between the finite and the infinite, between weakness and strength, the ephemeral and the eternal, the insignificant creature and the universal and perfect being.

In vain does man attempt to bring together the opposing terms of the great antithesis; he succeeds only in annihilating each by the other. If he energetically posits the finite and its phenomenal forms, he is shut up in empirical atheism. If he insists upon ideas of infinity of eternal substance, the absolute, he is lost in pantheism. And this impotence of theoretic thought to reconcile dialectically the two terms is only the ideal expression of the practical impotence of the man of sensation to take hold in his weakness upon the omnipotence of the eternal being.

Traditional metaphysics, idealistic or spiritualistic, operating upon these logical antitheses, comes to recognise that its attempted work of conciliation is vain; but it still fails to perceive the reason. It does not see that these abstract notions of finite and infinite being, of particular and ephemeral, universal and eternal, far from being the highest and richest notions of the mind, are its lowest and most denuded; that they belong in the outermost category of the reason, that of quantity, and correspond in reality to the most elementary religious consciousness—that of natural religions. In fact, do not all these religions logically end in a mythological polytheism, which at the first breath of rational criticism changes into a mocking atheism or a speculative pantheism?

To this first stage belongs also that vague sentiment of absolute dependence which Schleiermacher erroneously makes the fundamental characteristic of the Christian consciousness. No doubt the Christian still trembles before the majesty of the formidable power revealed to him in the spectacle of nature; no doubt he experiences the sense of the nothingness of his being and the infinite distance which separates him from the unknown God; but this is only a moment of his inner life, and

far from finding in it the basis of his consciousness, this overwhelming sense only quickens in him the desire to escape from it, and the joy of at once overcoming by faith the anguish of this dualism.

The first sense of deliverance and joy which man experiences is when the moral law, the law of righteousness, welling up from the depths of his being, bears him above this contact with blind and brutal forces of nature, and he hails it as at once the essence of his own being and that of the divine being. Then a true kinship is established between man and God; then the dialogue may begin between them, and a covenant of alliance founded upon morality may be established between them. At this second step moral conceptions emerge in theology: law, liberty, effort of the will in man; holiness, righteousness, reward or punishment in God. But can final harmony be realised in this legal order? The law awakens the consciousness of sin, and sin creates in the human consciousness between the righteous God and the sinful man a new chasm still deeper than the first. In vain does man seek to close it by throwing into it expiations, good works, and good resolutions: in all cases the religion of law necessarily ends, as in Judaism, in a strict and superficial pharisaism, or, as in the pagan world, in moral despair or the vain negation of the duty of righteousness.

Thus the religion of law no more than the religion of nature can save the man—that is, establish his union with the principle of his own being, and realise his harmony both with God and the world.

These experiences having been made and repeated wherever the religion of law succeeded the religion of nature, the time was fulfilled. In Jesus of Nazareth appeared a third form of the human religious consciousness, the supreme form everywhere announced and prepared for by the spirit of reformers and prophets as well as by the plaints and hopes of pious souls, and which since Jesus has become a living Christian consciousness in the bosom of humanity. In the religious consciousness and personal piety of Christ the religious relation was once again transformed. It no longer rests upon power nor upon law and the resulting

covenant, but upon a new sentiment, love. Love fills up the metaphysical distance and the moral chasm opened by sin; it brings together and unites that which was divided; it levels mountains and raises valleys, causes oppositions to disappear, reconciles antinomies, frees man from the burden of nature and of his own sin. Feeling himself loved without conditions, and in his turn loving without reserve, the orphan finds a father, the sinner finds pardon, and feels springing up in the depths of his being a new life of power, hope, and joy. This is what the Christian finds in the filial consciousness of Jesus Christ, which henceforth becomes his own consciousness. And this is why Jesus of Nazareth was not only the Messiah and Saviour of his people, but also of all peoples and all men. The religious evolution which took place in him took place in the very bosom and for the profit of all humanity.

The God who was first revealed as the strong God, *El*, then as the God who guards the compact of alliance, *Jahveh*, is at last revealed in the soul of Christ, and since then reveals himself in every believer as the *Father* God. This is the mysterious and fecund work of his Spirit, active in nature and in the heart of man.

To these successive revelations of God man has each time made the response which each inspired. To the manifestation of force he replied by interested sacrifices or magical prayers; to the manifestation of righteousness he replied by expiations and works; to the manifestation of love he replied by faith alone, that is to say, an act of confidence and the unreserved gift of the heart.

Such are the profound stratifications of the Christian consciousness, corresponding to those which history discovers in the religious evolution of humanity. Can theology have a higher or more beautiful mission than to learn to know them by following the very movement which brought them into existence?

IV

Construction of the System

All this being so, the system of Christian doctrine is found to consist of three stages, proceeding one from the other, and developing in an ascending movement toward the realised religious ideal, the full and eternal union of the soul with God.

The first stage brings to light the concepts which are derived from elementary religious experience, the religion of nature, explains how the antithesis between the finite and the infinite is brought to consciousness, and why, when consciousness stops here, it is impossible to bridge over the distance between the two terms. In this stage no proof can be found of the existence of God; no metaphysical idea of God can be constructed nor can the dogmas of creation and Providence be logically completed. We may not then hope to find in these elementary abstract notions any basis upon which the Christian doctrine can be built; but we do find in them the starting point of the Christian life and thought, which will together be developed under the stern incentive of experience.

In like manner, with the appearance of the moral life, the religious consciousness becomes enriched with new elements; the standpoint of thought is raised; new antinomies start up and as yet fail to find their solution. It is no longer the antithesis between the finite and the infinite; it is now that of the will, subject both to the flesh and to the moral law—that daughter of the Spirit of life—to the sin of man and the justice of God. A new world, more sublime and less obscure than that of physical nature, unfolds itself to reflective man, a higher region upon which the light shines fitfully, and in which, as on a day of tempest, despair and prayer engage in a conflict through which he will irresistibly attain to the third stage—the religion of redemption by love.

The following table shows the coherent and progressive system of Christian doctrine which it is the duty of theology to elaborate.

PART FIRST

The religion of nature, or the elementary consciousness of God. Metaphysical opposition between God and man.

1. Antithesis between the finite and the infinite. Its relative value. Its irreductibility.

2. Criticism of the philosophical proofs of the existence of God. Their irremediable weakness.

3. Impossibility of logically constructing the idea of God and determining his metaphysical attributes.

4. History and criticism of the dogma of creation.

5. History and criticism of the dogma of Providence.

6. Physical evil the condition of the birth and progress of the spiritual life.

PART SECOND

The religion of law, or the moral cognisance of God. Moral opposition between God and man.

1. Moral man; his origin and the conditions of his development.

2. The moral law.

3. Moral freedom.

4. The moral ideal found in God. The moral attributes of God.

5. The moral poverty of man.

6. The psychological notion of sin.

7. The religious notion of sin.

8. Theoretical and practical contradiction between the two notions. Moral despair.

PART THIRD

I

The religion of love, or the Christian cognisance of God. Salvation by redeeming love.

1. The historic human consciousness of Christ. His teaching, work, and death the revelation of redeeming love.
2. History and criticism of the dogma of expiation.
3. Justification by faith, sanctification, and eternal life.

II

1. The Church.
2. The Church's means of action, preaching of the gospel and rites called sacraments.
3. The relation of the Christian to his Church.
4. The destiny of the various churches.

III

1. The Kingdom of God, or the accomplishment of individual and collective salvation.
2. History and criticism of traditional eschatological doctrines.
3. The Kingdom of God and human history.
4. The future life.

IV

Metaphysical Dogmas

1. Predestination.
2. Christology.
3. The Trinity.
4. God all and in all.

Thus comprehended, theology abides in its own domain, which is the study and explanation of Christian experience. But though it has a special task, and is consequently independent, it is not isolated; it remains open to the action of all the various sciences, and carries on continual commerce with them. It touches by its origin upon primitive

anthropology and by its conclusions upon sociology, or the theory of the development of the life of individuals and societies. From the viewpoint to which it is lifted by Christian religious experience, it necessarily tends to see things whole; to find a total conception of the universe (*Weltanschauung*).

Naturally, it pursues the ideal of truth, not a conclusion which it has dogmatically imposed; and to arrive at this ideal it needs the collaboration of all other sciences. It must stand ready to broaden its horizon to admit all those discoveries which are continually being made in every field of research, and which either enlarge or make more accurate the inquest of humanity upon the universe. Theology is thus no more than any other a closed and completed science; it repeats with ever deeper conviction and sincerity the apostle's word: "We know in part." It is carrying on a work which needs long generations of workmen. It is never other than tentative, and he who writes these lines knows better than any other that his long and difficult enterprise is only a preliminary essay. If he does all that in him lies to bind up his sheaf, it is that he may give to others an idea of the fertility of the field in which he has laboured, and thus attract to it new labourers stronger and more able than himself. Never for a moment does he shut his eyes to the fact that his sheaf, so painfully and perhaps prematurely bound, must be unbound again to receive, perhaps ears grown at an earlier day and which he ought not to have overlooked, and surely ears of a new harvest not yet come to maturity.

Above all, he loves to think that the labour of philosophical reflection, however indispensable it may be, is nevertheless not the essential thing in the order of the Christian life; that there is something more urgent, more necessary, than to explain the experiences of piety, and that is to make them. At the close of this long effort of research and meditation, he is not exempt from a certain lassitude of mind and heart; and he lays down the pen with the prayer of our old Corneille:

"O Dieu de vérité, pour qui seul je soupire,
Unis moi donc à toi par de forts et doux nœuds.
Je me lasse d'ouir, je me lasse de lire,
Mais non pas de te dire:
'C'est toi suel que je veux.'"

"O God of truth, whom only I desire,
Bind me to thee by ties as strong as sweet;
I tire of hearing, of reading too I tire,
But not of saying, 'Thee, God, alone I need.'"

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

Vide E. Scherer, "De l'autorité en matière de foi" (*Revue de Théol.*, de Strasbourg, 1850, vol. i. p. 65); "La critique et la foi," 1850. P. Jalaguier, "Le témoignage de Dieu, base de la foi chrétienne," Toulouse, 1851; "Introduction à la dogmatique," Paris, 1877, especially chap. vii. C. Rabaud, "Essai sur les rapports de la foi et de l'autorité," 1851. A. Vinet, "L'éducation, la famille et la société," 1855; "Mélanges," 1869. J. F. Astié, "Esprit de Vinet," 1861. Debry, "De l'autorité en matière de foi," 1882. J. Lafon, "De l'autorité en matière de foi," 1885. Grétillat, "Exposé de théol. systématique," i., 1885, et ii., 1892. S. Martineau, "The Seat of Authority," 1891. Léopold Monod, "Le problème de l'autorité," 3d edition, Paris, 1891. E. Ménégoz, "L'autorité de Dieu," Paris, 1892. E. Doumergue, "L'autorité en matière de foi," 1894. A. Bœgner, "Quelques réflexions sur l'autorité en matière de foi," *Rev Chr.*, 1894. H. Bois, "La connaisance religieuse," Paris, 1894, chap. xiv., "De l'autorité." Darlu, "De l'individualisme," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 1898. A. Vidalot, "De l'autorité d'après Joseph de Maistre," 1898.

APPENDIX II

Thomas Aquinas, "Summa Theol.," Pars I a, quæst. 1, art. 1 and 2: *Necessarium igitur fuit præter philosophicas disciplinas quæ per rationem investigantur, sacram doctrinam per revelationem haberi.* Art. 2: *Sacra doctrina est scientia ex principiis notis lumine superioris scientiæ, quæ Dei et beatorum.* Art. 8: *Argumentari ex auctoritate est maxime proprium hujus doctrinæ, eo quod principia ejus per revelationem habentur et sic oportet quod credatur auctoritati eorum quibus revelatio facta est.* This notion of theology and of the method of authority remains immutable in the Roman Catholic Church. In his "Prælectiones Theol." (1, p. 2) Perrone also says: *Divina enim revelatione in tuto posita atque ecclesiæ catholicæ auctoritate firmiter constituta facilis erit via ad ea omnia quæ hinc sponte quodammodo fluunt.* The Scholastics of Protestantism replace the authority of the Church by that of the Bible, but their conception and practice of theological method are the same. It is always the method of authority. Perrone, "Theol. Dogm.," says: "The sole rule which Jesus Christ willed to leave to converted peoples or those still to be converted, to fix in an immediate manner what they must believe and do, was the public, perpetual, and living authority of the Church. Whence it follows that the system of

authority is in such manner bound up with Revelation that we must reject all revelation . . . or admit a certain, sure, and even perpetual method by which it is possible for men to know those truths and precepts without fear of misapprehension. It is the established authority of God himself."

APPENDIX III

Vinet, "Mélanges," p. 97: "Society forgets that, respectable and necessary as she is, man was not created exclusively for her; that she is as much the instrument of the individual as the individual is her instrument; that Providence perhaps has not so much committed man to the care and perfecting influences of society as society to the care and perfecting influences of man; that humanity is real and living only in the individual; that he alone lives, believes, hopes, obeys; that he therefore is the true object of the divine attention and judgment; that not society but the man must appear, and already does daily appear, before the eternal tribunal. . . A vivid belief in another world and serious expectation of it would suffice to awaken in souls that individuality which is remedilessly dying out in the absence of this immense interest. . ." Nothing is more true. But except we admit that death breaks all the bonds of solidarity which here below attach the individual to the family and his race, individual salvation can never be the final end of divine Redemption. That end is shown, in the Gospels, to be the kingdom of God realised at once on earth and in heaven, and by this religious notion social aspiration and individual autonomy are reconciled in a perfection whence will flow universal happiness and liberty in the life of love.

APPENDIX IV

There have been two Gallicanisms: that of Pierre d'Ailly, Gerson, the University of Paris, the Assembly of Bourges in 1439, and that of Thomassin, Bossuet, and the Assembly of the Clergy in 1682. The former was much more radical than the latter. Not only did the Councils of Pisa and Constance judge and depose Popes, but they set up as a principle that by *natural, divine, and canonical law* the Pope is subject to the Council General, which has the power to judge and condemn him. Much more: the authority of the Church and the Councils remains entire, even without the Pope. Gerson, Opera, edit. Dupin, 1706, II: "De Unitate Ecclesiastica," "De Auferibilitate Papæ." Nicolas de Cusa, "De Concordantia Catholica," 1437. V. Lenfant, "Hist. du Concile de Pise," and "Hist. du Concile de Constance," 1724 and 1727, etc.

APPENDIX V

This is the contention of the Assembly of the Clergy of France, 1682. The fourth declaration of this Assembly expressly submits the use of apostolic power to the rule of the ancient canons of the Church, and is thus expressed: *Though the Pope have*

the principal part in questions of faith, and though his decrees concern all the churches and each church in particular, yet is his judgment not incontrovertible, unless the consent of the Church have been given.

These Gallican maxims were reaffirmed with energy by the Synod of Pistoia (1786). Pope Pius VI reproduced in the Constitution "Auctorem Fidei" the condemnations with which his predecessors, Innocent XI, as early as 1682, and Alexander VIII, in 1698, had already pronounced upon them.

The policy of the Roman See since the Council of Trent has been to set aside every teaching contrary to the absolute sovereignty and personal infallibility of the Pope, and to make him supreme and triumphant in fact, before proclaiming him such in law. The final result was inevitable.

APPENDIX VI

Gregory VII, Letters. He not only claimed infallibility and absolute sovereignty over the whole earth, but even, for the person of the Pope, absolute sanctity. It was logical and psychological. The advocates of infallibility later abandoned the last postulate, doubtless fearing that the lives of certain Popes would vitiate the entire dogma. And yet, how is it possible to understand the exercise of such power over all humanity, and a complete infallibility of inspiration, without sanctity? Boniface VIII, Bull "Unam Sanctam Ecclesiam." Thomas Aquinas developed the principal attributes of the Pope: *Summas Pontifex, caput ecclesiæ, cura ecclesiæ universalis, plenitudo potestatis, potestas determinandi novum symbolum* ("Summa Theol.," sec. 2, quæst. 1, art, 10). Bellarmine, "De Summo Pontifice Capite Totius Militantis Ecclesiæ," in the "Disputations." Catechismus Romanus of Pius V. These are the principal precursors of the dogma of infallibility.

APPENDIX VII

Leo XIII, Encycl., "Immortale. Dei," 1885. *Non absimili modo Pius IX, ut sese opportunitas dedit, ex opinionibus falsis quæ maxime valere cœpissent plures notavit easdemque postea in unum cogi jussit* [Syllabus] *ut in tanta errorum collusione haberent catholici homines quod sine offensione sequerentur . . . Itaque in tam difficili rerum cursu catholici homines, si nos ut oportet audierint, facile videbunt quæ sua cujusque sint tam in opinionibus quam in factis officia.* ET IN OPINANDO QUIDEM QUÆCUMQUE PONTIFICES ROMANI TRADIDERINT VEL TRADITURI SINT, SINGULA NECESSE EST ET TENERE JUDICIO STABILI COMPREHENSA ET PALAM, QUOTIES RES POSTULAVERIT, PROFITERI AC NOMINATIM DE IIS QUAS LIBERTATES VOCANT NOVISSIMO TEMPORE QUÆSITAS OPORTET APOSTOLICÆ SEDIS STARE JUDICIO ET QUOD IPSA SENSERIT IDEM SENTIRE SINGULOS, etc.

APPENDIX VIII

He condemns himself to understand nothing from the preaching of Jesus who

fails to set it over against the Messianic hopes to which it responded, and within their framework. In the last two centuries before the Christian era a very curious apocalyptic chronology had been elaborated in the midst of Judaism. The last period of the world's history was to be inaugurated by the reappearance of the prophet Elijah and the coming of the Messiah. All the New Testament views of the future presuppose this chronology. Jesus made no exception in this respect. Otherwise he could not have believed himself to be the Messiah, nor have announced the Messianic kingdom as shortly to appear. Matt. iii. 1-12, iv. 14-16, v. 1-10, vii. 13, 21-23, viii. 11-13, xi. 12-15, xvi. 13-28, xvii. 11-13, xix. 27-30, xxi. 33ff, xxiv. 3, 15, 29-31, 37, xxv. 1-13, 31-46, xxvi. 64. *Cf.* parallel passages in the other Gospels. See also in the Fourth Gospel, John v. 25, xiv. 28, xvi. 16-23. It was a general belief that the age then present, ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος, was drawing to a close, and that the future age, ὁ αἰὼν μέλλων, was about to begin.

APPENDIX IX

The word ἐκκλησία, church, is found only twice upon the lips of Jesus and in only one Gospel, Matt. xvi. 18, xviii, 17. Now these two texts certainly belong to the last revision, to the last Greek working over of our Gospel of Matthew, which at the earliest dates from the last ten or fifteen years of the second century. The second of these texts is therefore not more authoritative than the first; but it creates no great difficulty, because the word "church" here signifies simply the assembly of the brethren, the Christian synagogue. Only, the fact of a disciplinary procedure so formally established discloses an origin posterior to Jesus, and a certain duration of ecclesiastical life. (*Cf.* 2 Cor. xiii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. v. 13; 1 Tim. v. 19.) Of far other significance is the text of Matt. xvi. 18. It is the famous *Tu es Petrus:* "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This text is wanting in the parallel passages of Mark and Luke, and this omission is incomprehensible if these Evangelists had found it in the first *logia* of Matthew or the first apostolic tradition of Peter, which Mark is said to have reproduced. Such a declaration is absolutely incomprehensible in the totality and the internal coherence of the Messianic teaching of Jesus. Furthermore it does not appear until nearly sixty or seventy years after his death, at which time the ecclesiastical legend as to the functions and the primacy of Peter had begun to be formed. Here we have its first bud. The Catholic theory of the Church is made to rest definitively upon a play upon words, made early, no doubt, with reference to the surname given by Jesus to Peter, and the apostolic work by him accomplished. *Vide* A. Réville, "Jésus de Nazareth," 1897, ii. p. 220, 499.

APPENDIX X

No single apostle concerned himself with what we call posterity; none wrote a line, prepared a liturgy, founded an institution, ecclesiastic or other, for the future.

The future was closed to them. They believed themselves to be living in the last days of the world. A great number of things which surprise us in their conduct or their ideas, community of goods, indifference to persecutions and menaces, disdain even of marriage and other earthly blessings, are intelligible in the light of their apocalyptic hopes. Acts ii. 1; Thess. iv. 15-17; 2 Thess. ii. 1-12; Gal. i. 4; 1 Cor. vii. 29, xv. 51, 52, xvi. 22; Rom. viii. 17-25; Col. iii. 1-4; Phil. iii. 11, iv. 5; Heb. i. 2; Jas. iv. 7, 8; 1 Pet. i. 5, v. 4, 10; 2 Pet. iii. 8-11; 1 John ii. 18; Rev. i. 1, 3, xxii. 7, 12, 20.

APPENDIX XI

Never, in the New Testament, is the conception of the Church confused with that of the Kingdom of Heaven. The word, ἐκκλησία, the Greek translation of קהל or עדה, first designated particular groups of believers (Rom. xvi. 4, 5, 16; 1 Cor. i. 2, iv. 17, vii. 17, xi. 18, etc.), then the totality of these groups considered as the body of Christ, animated by his spirit, continuing his preaching and his sufferings, to be glorified with him in the day of his appearing.

In the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians the notion of the Church is still farther idealised till it becomes a sort of metaphysical or Gnostic entity, destined to manifest in visible manner the plenitude of the life of Christ, as Christ manifested the plenitude of the life of God (πλήρωμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ). Eph. i. 22, 23, iii. 10, 21, iv. 12-16, v. 23-27, 32; Col. i. 18, 24. *Cf.* ii. 10.

APPENDIX XII

This tendency of the ideal Church to translate itself into fact in the single and well-ordered constitution of a visible Church is very apparent in the Pastoral Epistles which make the transition in the early years of the second century between the apostolic communities dominated by inspiration and the Catholic Church about to appear. Apostle and prophet were to be replaced by the bishop, and the communion of the Spirit by obedience to the rule of faith. 1 Tim. iii. 1-7, 15, iv. 6ff.; 2 Tim. i. 13, ii. 1, iii. 14ff.; Tit. i. 5ff.

APPENDIX XIII

In the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's Epistles Antioch and Jerusalem already appear, each as the rival metropolis of a Christianity of very different physiognomy and tendency. Upon James and his predominant part in the formation of the Jerusalem church see Acts xv. 13ff., xxi. 18; Gal. ii. 9, 12 (τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου); Clementine Homilies, "Letter from Peter to James"; Hegesippus in Eusebius, H. E. II. 23. This office of head of the church helps us to understand why Josephus mentions James's condemnation and martyrdom. It was an event for the entire city (Ant. xx. 9, 1).

APPENDIX XIV

The conflict between Peter and Paul in the church at Antioch was a veritable

scandal for the Fathers of the Church. We see by the counterpart of Paul's story in the Clementine Homilies what a din it made, and what bitternesses it left in Ebionite Christian circles. To do away with the scandal Clement of Alexandria advanced the theory that Paul's adversary at Antioch was not one of the Twelve, but a man of like name, a Cephas who was only one of the Seventy disciples (Eusebius, H. E. I. 12). Jerome gravely says that at bottom Peter and Paul were not dissentient, but in perfect accord. They had simply resolved to act a little play, before agreed upon, to enlighten the Judaisers, and Peter, out of humility, had accepted the part of devil's advocate. Upon which Augustine protests in the name of the sincerity of the sacred writers, and prefers to confess a weakness in Peter. The history of Catholic exegesis of the text in the Epistle to the Galatians is extremely curious.

APPENDIX XV

Gal. iii. 6-14; 1 Cor. ix. 8ff.; Rom. iii. 25; Heb. v., vii., ix.; Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 40. Assimilation between the Levitical worship and hierarchy on one side, and Catholic worship and clergy on the other, marches rapidly from the beginning to the close of the second century. From the time of Tertullian the name *sacerdos*, Gentile and Jew in origin, but not Christian, passes current to designate the bishops and elders of the earlier times. The meaning of *sacerdos* even becomes the same as the word *priest*, which has an entirely different origin and at first designated an entirely different function, that of *elder* or *senior*. Diestel, "Die Geschichte des A. T. in der Christlichen Kirche," 1869.

APPENDIX XVI

Irenæus, "Adv. Hær.," iii. 24: *In ecclesia disposita est communicatio Christi, id est spiritus sanctus et scala adscensionis ad Deum. In ecclesia enim posuit Deus apostolos, prophetas, doctores et universam reliquam operationem Spiritus, cujus non sunt participes omnes, qui non currunt ad Ecclesiam sed semetipsos fraudant a vita. . . . Ubi enim Ecclesia ubi et spiritus Dei et ubi spiritus Dei illic Ecclesia, et omnis gratia.* The thought of Irenæus still maintains a certain equilibrium between the Church, criterion of the Spirit, and the Spirit, criterion of the Church, and still permits up to a certain point the judging of the Church by the truth of the Spirit as well as the judging of the Spirit by the authority of the Church. It is a moment of transition between Justin Martyr—who making faith in Christ as *logos* of God the sign that one belongs to the Christian Church, included with it even pagan philosophers like Socrates and Heraclitus (1st Apol. 46)—and Cyprian, who made connection with the visible Church the sign of Christian faith. "De Unit. Eccl.," 4ff.

APPENDIX XVII

Vide Tertullian, "De præscriptione Hæreticorum." Vincent de Lerins, "Commonitorium pro Cath. Fidei Antiquitate et Universitate adv. Profanas Omnium

Hæres. Novitates." Bellarmine, "De Verbo Dei." R. Simon: "Hist. crit. des principaux commentateurs du N. T.," 1693. Bossuet, "Hist. des Variations." "Conference avec Claude." "Avertissements aux Protestants." "Défense de la Tradition et des Saints-Pères." Moehler, "Symbolik," 9th edition, 1884. Newman, "Essay on the Development of the Christ. Doctrine," 1848. Perrone, "Prælect. Theologicæ," t. i. and ii. 18. J. Pédezert, "Le témoignage des Pères," 1892. Thiersch, "Vorlesungen üb. Katholicismus u. Protestantismus," 2d. edition, 1848. F. C. Bauer, "Der Gegensatz des Kath. u. Protest.," 1836. Holtzmann, "Kanon u. Tradition," 1859. K. Hase, "Handb. der ev. Polemik," 5th edition, 1891.

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APPENDIX XVIII

Concil. Tr. Sess. IV. Decret de canon. Scripturis. *S. Synodus hoc sibi perpetuo ante oculos proponens, ut, sublatis erroribus, puritas ipsa evangelii in ecclesia conservetur . . . perspiciensque hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et, sine scripto, traditionibus, quæ ex ipsius Christi ore ab apostolis acceptæ, aut ab ipsis apostolis, Spiritu Sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditæ, ad nos usque pervenerint; orthodoxorum patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam V. quam N. T. necnon traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu S. dictatas, et continua successione in ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et veneratur.*

Though the two authorities, of Scripture and of tradition, are put theoretically upon the same line, the first does in fact always stand in subordination to the second. Sess. IV, Decret. de edit. et usu sanct. Litterarum.

That the Church by its tradition is mistress of the text of Scripture as of its interpretation is proved by the decision of the same council touching St. Jerome's translation of the Vulgate. The same Session and Decree: *S. Synodus statuit et declarat, ut hæc ipsa vetus et vulgata editio, quæ longo tot sæculorum usu in ipsa ecclesia probata est, in publicis lectionibus, disputationibus, prædicationibus, et expositionibus pro authentica habeatur, et ut nemo eam rejicere, quovis prætextu, audeat vel præsumat.*

APPENDIX XIX

No one will here adduce Mark xvi. 16, which is part of a supplement to the Second Gospel, entirely foreign to the primitive work. If Jesus uttered this saying, it is inexplicable that no apostle, no New Testament book, alludes to it. It will furthermore be observed that baptism is rather presupposed as already existing than prescribed as something new in the words which Matthew puts into the mouth of the Risen Lord. See Conybeare, *Zeitschr. f. neutest. Wissenschaft,* 1901, pp. 285-288.

From John iii. 22-26, curiously corrected in iv. 2, it appears that there was not unanimity as to the fact whether Jesus had himself baptised or simply ordered that those who came to him should be baptised. It seemed necessary to connect the apostolic custom with Jesus, and yet they hardly knew how. Jesus never spoke of any other baptism than that of suffering and death. Mark x. 38 and paral.

APPENDIX XX

Acts viii. 12-24, x. 44-48, xix. 1-6. It appears from these texts: 1, that baptism with water was considered incomplete without the baptism of the Spirit; 2, that the effusion of the Spirit came by the imposition of hands. In the eyes of Paul baptism of the Spirit alone made men Christians, by uniting them to Christ and to his body, which is the Church. Expressions like that of Titus iii. 5, *διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου,* and John iii. 5, *ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος,* (*cf.* xix. 34, 35, and 1 John v. 6), although they do not yet materialise baptism, yet assimilate water and the Spirit, and mark a point in the evolution of the notion of baptism.

APPENDIX XXI

It seems evident that Paul in Rom. vi. 1-6; Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. vi. 11, x. 2; and even in Eph. v. 26, has a symbolic conception of baptism. This becomes clear from a close study of Col. ii. 11-12, precisely parallel. It is faith which unites us to Christ in baptism and raises us up with him, faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead; and we find the decisive proof that baptism is only a symbol in verse 11,

where the apostle makes use of the figure of circumcision to express the same truth: *ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.*

The affirmation of 1 Pet. iii. 21 is also thoroughly spiritual: "Baptism doth now save you, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God."

But even in the apostolic age we find traces of a contrary conception of baptism, as the indispensable condition and even the cause of salvation. Paul does not praise, but neither does he blame those who baptise for the benefit of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 29), and he draws from the practice an argument for the resurrection. The rite was therefore believed to be necessary for those who would have part in the resurrection, at least so far as the body was concerned. Fifty years later the Epistle of Barnabas said: "Its water is faithful," and again, "We descend into the water, full of sins and stains, and we come up from it laden with fruits in our heart." And Hermas, "Vis." iii. 3: *ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν διὰ ὕδατος ἐσώθη, καὶ σωθήσεται.* Justin taught that to be baptised was synonymous with being regenerated, 1 Ap. 61. With Tertullian the Roman Catholic idea of baptism is well-nigh reached: "De Baptismo," 3.

APPENDIX XXII

Rom. vi. 3-5; 1 Cor. i. 13; Gal. iii. 27; Acts. ii. 38, viii. 16, x. 48, xix. 5. There is not the slightest trace of any other formula. Cyprian remarked this peculiarity and gave its true explanation. Epist. LXXIII. 17, 18. The simple formula was employed in the case of Jews, who already knew the Father and had no need to be baptised in his name. The Roman Catechism seems also to admit the fact, and explain it by the purpose of the apostle to give more lustre to the name and person of Jesus Christ. "De Baptismo," 15, 16. Protestant exegetes have been more timid or less candid.

APPENDIX XXIII

Vide A. Harnack, art. "Apostol. Symbolum," Encyl. von Herzog u. Hauck, 3d edition, vol. i. The same, "Dogmengeschichte," vol. i. (English translation). Caspari, "Ungedruckte . . . Quellen zur Gesch. des Taufsymbols," 1866, 1869, 1875, 1879. Hahn, "Biblioth. der Symbole." Zezschwitz, "System d. Katechetik." Swainson, "The Nicene and Apostolic Creeds." M. Nicolas, "Le Symbole des ap. Essai Hist." Coquerel, "Histoire du credo." E. Chaponnière, Art. "Symbole des ap." in Encyl. des sc. relig., vol. i. (McGiffert, "The Apostles' Creed," 1902, pp. 7, 100.)

APPENDIX XXIV

Gnosticism had a decisive part in the definition of the Catholic faith. Most of the articles of the symbol are directed against it, and it can be historically understood

only in the light of this controversy. The unity of God, the affirmation that the Father is also the Creator of the heavens and the earth, are the contradiction of the dualism or the emanationism of the Gnosis. The description of the Christ as the only Son of God is a protest against a plurality of mediators. His birth, at once of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, his crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, his death and burial, are noted in order to affirm the reality of the incarnation, the passion, and the death of the Son of God, and so to cut short all Docetism. The last judgment, the authority of the Catholic Church, the resurrection of the flesh, are due to the same cause. This interpretation may not be doubted when we read Ignatius, "Ad. Magn.," 11; "Ad. Ephes.," 7, 18; "Ad. Trall.," 9; "Ad. Smyrn.," 1, and Polycarp, "Ad Philipp.," 2 and 7, etc. Nothing can better show how everywhere and always tradition, even where most objective in appearance, is dependent upon the circumstances in the midst of which it arises. The history of the Oriental churches, in their richer and more varying rules of faith, bears still more plainly the marks of successive theological controversies. We may, so to speak, date each one of them by means of its evident pre-occupations.

APPENDIX XXV

Eusebius: H. E. III. 39: Papias wrote: *Οὐκ σκνήσω δέ σοι καὶ ὅσα ποτὲ παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καλῶς ἔμαθον καὶ καλῶς ἐμνημόνευσα συνκατατάξαι ταῖς ἑρμηνείαις διαβεβαιούμενος ὑπέρ αὐτῶν ἀλήθειαν. . . . . εἰ δή που καὶ παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι, τοὺς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λόγους· τί Ἀνδρέας ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν ἢ τί Φίλιππος ἢ τί Θωμᾶς ἢ Ἰάκωβος ἢ τί Ἰωάννης ἢ Ματθαῖος . . . . ἅ τε Ἀριστίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης, οἱ τοῦ κυρίου μαθηταί, λέγουσιν. Οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων, τοσοῦτόν με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον, ὅσον τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης.*

Tertullian, "De Præscript. Hæretic.," 37: *Si hæc ita se habent, ut veritas nobis adjudicetur, quicumque in ea regula incedimus, quam ecclesia ab apostolis, apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo tradidit, constat ratio propositi nostri definientis non esse admittendos hæreticos ad inuendam de Scripturis provocationem, quos sine Scripturis probamus ad Scripturas non pertinere.* It is the reasoning of a jurist, not of a historian. The enacted dogma is put in the place of interrogated history.

APPENDIX XXVI

Irenæus, *Ibid.*, III. 1, 3. *Et habemus enumerare eos qui ab apostolis instituti sunt, episcopi in ecclesiis et successores eorum usque ad nos.* Then follows a list of bishops of Rome from Peter and Linus to Eleutherus. A little earlier Hegesippus, who was most concerned about the episcopal successions for the same reason of legitimacy, drew up another list of which we have not the whole (Eusebius, H. E. IV. 22). Similar lists, varying irreconcilably as to names, chronology, and length of episcopate, are found in Eusebius ("Chronicle" and "Eccl. Hist."), Hippolytus, Rufinus, Augustine,

the Apostolic Constitutions, Liber Pontificalis, etc. It needs only to compare these lists for a moment, to perceive that they were made from traditional or legendary elements, diversely combined, until at last papal authority officially consecrated one which has no more verisimilitude than any of the others. See Lipsius, "Die Papstverzeichnisse des Eusebius," etc.; "Chronologie d. roemisch. Bischoefe," etc. A. Harnack, "Chronologie d. altchristl. Litteratur." "Die aeltesten Bischofslisten."

APPENDIX XXVII

Being the double testimony of the same apostolate, tradition and the Scriptures were in the eyes of Irenæus of equal authority, "Adv. Haer.," III. 1, 1. Tertullian ("De Præs. Hæret.," 29 and 38), Athanasius ("Oratio cont. Arian.," 1, 8; "Adv. Gent.," 1), Augustine ("De Doctrina Christ.," i. 37, ii. 9; "Ad Hieronymum Epist.," 19) energetically affirmed that all that is necessary to the proclamation of the truth and the edification of faith is contained in the Scriptures. On the other hand, in favour of tradition, Chrysostom, "Ad Thess.," ii. 15. Epiphanius, "Hær.," 61, 6. John of Damascus, "De Fide Orthod.," iv. 12.

APPENDIX XXVIII

Tertullian, "De Virg.," vol. i.: *Dominus noster veritatem se, non consuetudinem, cognominavit.* The African church, up to and including Augustine, often repeated this watchword. To the Roman bishop Stephen, who urged against him the tradition of his church, Cyprian replied (Epist. 74, 2), *Unde est ista traditio? . . . Ea enim facienda esse quæ scripta sunt Deus testatur et præmonet ad Jesum Nave dicens: Non recedat liber legis hujus ex ore tuo . . . ut observes facere omnia quæ scripta sunt in eo.* And in chapter 3: *Item Dominus in evangelio increpans similiter dicit: Rejicitis mandatum Dei, ut traditionem vestram statuatis.* And in chapter 9: *Consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est.* Epist. 71, 3: *Non est de consuetudine præscribendum sed ratione vicendum.*

APPENDIX XXIX

The exact number of ecumenical councils is not known. Bellarmine counts eighteen, excluding, in the West, those of Basel and Constance. The Greek Church recognises only seven. Even these were disputed by certain doctors. Gregory Nazianzen recognised only one, the first, that of Nicæa, and said he was ashamed of having sat in the bad company of the second, that of Chalcedon. The fifth and seventh proclaimed ecumenical councils to be infallible organs of tradition.

As for the Fathers of the Church, it is known that Abelard, in his famous "Sic et non," amused himself by bringing to light their almost infinite contradictions. See also Daillé, "De l'emploi des S. Pères," 1632. Rich Simon., "Hist. Crit. des

commentateurs du N. T.," 1693. Reply of Bossuet, "Défense de la tradition et des S. Pères," published in 1753 and completed by F. Lachet in 1864. Pédézert, "Le Temoignage des Pères," 1892. As for the ecclesiastical practices, modern Catholic doctors have lost themselves in subtile distinctions between generals and particulars, those which concern dogma and those which touch only upon discipline, those which date from the apostles and those which are of human origin; those permanent and obligatory, those human and variable. It is needless to say that harmony is never found in these distinctions.

APPENDIX XXX

Bellarmine found the practical solution. He closes his chapter on the criteria of tradition by this triumphant conclusion ("De Verbo Dei Scripto et Non Scripto," Lib. IV., cap. 9): *At nunc defecit certa successio in omnibus ecclesiis apostolicis, præterquam in Romana, et ideo ex testimonio hujus solius ecclesiæ sumi potest certum argumentum ad probandas apostolicas traditiones.* This is why every question must be referred back to the Roman Church alone.

APPENDIX XXXI

Perrone, III.: *Ecclesiæ magisterio subordinata est Scriptura et traditio, cum ejus tantum sit tum de veris ac genuinis Scripturis earumque legitimo sensu, tum de veris divinisque traditionibus judicare.*

H. M. Pezanni, Codex S. cathol. Romanæ Ecclesiæ, Can. 33: *Pontifex Romanus jura omnia in scrinio pectoris sui censetur habere.* It has been possible even to maintain that documents notoriously unauthentic, like the "False Decretals" or the apocryphal text of 1 John v. 7 about the three witnesses, having been admitted by the authority of the Church, have received from that decision a sort of "supernatural authorization." M. Schreben, "Handb. d. Kathol. Dogm." Freiburg, 1873, vol. i. No. 356.

APPENDIX XXXII

Vide J. Réville, "Les Origines de l'épiscopat." E. Hatch, "The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches." Words change in meaning as institutions are modified. With respect to none is this more true than to the word ἐπίσκοπος. We shall comprehend nothing in history so long as we persist in reading the documents of the past through the spectacles put before our eyes by the ideas of the present.

APPENDIX XXXIII

The directing members of the church of Corinth are at that time called πρεσβύτεροι and ἡγούμενοι (1, 3), and it appears that we must make a distinction between

them. The former, more numerous, formed the Senate, the deliberative council of the community; the latter, in whom we must recognise the "episcopoi," were the executive power of the Senate, the directors and administrators delegated to preside over public worship and over assemblies and the administration of the common business. Nothing is now needed but to pass from the plural to the single episcopate.

APPENDIX XXXIV

Gal. 1. 17, 1. Paul does not claim for himself alone, by some exceptional title, the name of apostle. He applies it to Silvanus as well as to himself, according to 1 Thess. ii. 6, to Barnabas in 1 Cor. iv. 5, 6; to Apollos as to Cephas in 1 Cor. iv. 6, 9. He cites Andronicus and Junias as *ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις*, Rom. xvi. 7. And let no one say that Paul thus enlarged the use of the word in a personal interest. No, the word was thus used before the conversion of Paul. Thus James became an apostle after the appearance to him of the Risen Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 7. *Cf.* Gal. i. 19. The same thing is still more evident from 1 Cor. xv. 5, compared with xv. 7. It is very evident that the words *τοῖς ἀποστόλοις πᾶσιν* of verse 7 cannot be referred to the *τοῖς δώδεκα* of verse 5. Let us add that the entire argument of Paul to establish that all the divine signs of apostolicity are found in his person and work would have no meaning if the import of apostolicity had previously been restricted to a fixed number of persons. The Twelve do not appear as forming a higher and closed college until somewhat late after their death, for the first time in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, which in its present form did not see the light before the year 85 or 90, and in the Revelation of John, which is of the same period. The book of the "Teaching of the Apostles" knows the *απόστολοι* of the first times, going from church to church with the prophets. But their credit falls with their inspiration: ch. xi. However, at that time it was still they and not the *presbteroi* who performed apostolic functions and were the true successors of the apostles. The rise of the episcopal power soon effected their final disappearance.

APPENDIX XXXV

"Teach. of the Apos.," xv.: "Elect for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord [etc.], and let them conduct public worship in place of the prophets and preachers. Do not therefore despise them, for it is they, with the prophets and preachers, whom you ought to honor." Is it not significant that even at this time it was necessary in certain churches (rural, no doubt) to protect the influence of the bishops against the fame of inspired itinerants?

APPENDIX XXXVI

Phil. i. 1; *cf.* the letter of Polycarp to these very Philippians, i. 1; Acts xx. 17-28,

in which we see that Paul, having sent from Miletus for the *presbyteroi* of the church of Ephesus, told them that the Holy Spirit (not he, Paul) had made them *bishops* of the flock which had been confided to them, Heb. xiii. 17, 24, where both classes are called ἡγούμενοι as in Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 1, 3; 1 Peter v. 1, where the writer calls himself their fellow-elder, συμπρεσβύτερος; "Teach. of the Apost.," xv. Hermas, "Visio," iii. 9; Letter of Hadrian to Serv. in Vopisc. Saturn., 8. The sole distinction which can be enacted, according to Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 1, 3, is that the word *presbyteroi* is larger than the word *hêgoumenoi,* in the sense that the body of the former comprehends not only the *hêgoumenoi* who preside at assemblies, but all who in one way or another watch over and participate in the government of the churches.

APPENDIX XXXVII

S. Jerome, "Ad Titum," i. 7, and Gratian, Decretum, P. I., D. xcv. 5, *Olim idem erat presbyter qui et episcopus.* There is now no further argument on this point. Where Father Petau and the Jesuits say to-day that this is due to the fact that in the beginning all presbyters were at the same time provisionally consecrated bishops, it is a pleasant manner, but only a manner, of admitting the undeniable fact of identity. Father Perrone also tries to do justice to history by saying that the proposition, *episcopi sunt presbyteris superiores jure divino,* is not an article of faith. The Council of Trent, Sess. xxiii. can. 6. says, however: *Si quis dicerit in ecclesia catholica non esse hierarchiam divina ordinatione institutam quæ constat ex episcopis, presbyteris et ministris, anathema sit!* Whom shall we believe?

APPENDIX XXXVIII

Rom. xvi. 5ff. The churches of Corinth who all through this chapter salute the churches of Ephesus are, like the latter, family churches, such as are very well designated by the German word *Hauskirchen. Cf.* 1 Cor. i. 11, xvi. 15, 19; Acts xviii. 7, xvii. 5, xvi. 15; Col. iv. 15, etc.

APPENDIX XXXIX

In the well-known fragment called the Muratorian Canon we read, regarding the book of Hermas: *Pastorem vero nuperrime temporibus nostris H. conscripsit, sedente cathedra urbis Romæ ecclesiæ Pio episcopo fratre ejus.* Where Irenæus is not reproducing an official list, manufactured for the needs of the cause, but speaking freely and without precaution, he makes it very clear at what period he himself recognises the historicity of the list; that is, beyond which names he finds, not a bishop, but presbyteroi, at Rome: Apud Euseb., H. E. V. 24; οἱ πρὸ Σωτῆρος πρεσβύτεροι, οἱ προστάντες τῆς ἐκκλησίας and a little farther on, V. 24, 16: οἱ πρὸ Ἀνικήτου πρεσβύτεροι·

APPENDIX XL

That Episcopal pretensions are concerned is made indubitable by verses 9, 10: ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν . . . οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐπιδέχεται τοὺς ἀδελφούς . . . (the question, according to verse 6, is of foreign brethren, itinerant preachers, whom Diotrephes could not endure καὶ τοὺς βουλομένους κωλύει καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐκβάλλει. A. Harnack throws a fine light on this point, "Gesch. d. altchr. Litter.," ii.

APPENDIX XLI

John i. 41. It was John and Andrew who first came to Jesus; Peter arrives only third. Peter speaks here only once in the name of the Twelve, vi. 69. But Jesus makes him no promise. He simply serves as intermediary between the multitude and the Master. On the other hand, this part is taken by Philip, by Andrew, and as to John, he is the intermediary between Peter and Jesus, either his protector or his rival, everywhere more intelligent and more fortunate, xiii. 23, 24. It is John to whom Jesus in dying confides his mother and addresses one of his last utterances, xix. 26. Thus, while Peter fled and denied his Master, John stands faithful at the foot of the cross. It is John who sees and certifies to the mystery of the blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of Jesus, xix. 35. More swift than Peter, he first reaches the sepulchre, and at a first glance he believes, xx. 3-8. Finally, it is John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who first recognises the Risen One on the lake shore, and points him out to Peter, xxi. 7. All these data could not have been acumulated without a purpose.

APPENDIX XLII

For the initial meaning of the word see Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22; Acts xiv. 23, xxi. 18. As originally the charge of teaching, the *munus docendi,* did not pertain essentially to the "elders," but simply the charge of guidance and administration, if the apostolic preachers formed a sort of clergy it may be said that the "elders" were at first essentially laical.

APPENDIX XLIII

In Acts i. 26: ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς, and in Matt. xxviii. and paral. the word signifies dice, or method of fortune-telling. Evidently this is the primitive meaning from which is derived that of *lot* obtained in a division or distribution of cures, and in consequence, the cure itself. Acts i. 17: τὸν κλῆρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης. Thence it became equivalent to rank, class, order. Thus Acts xxvi. 18, the Gentiles are called to receive the forgiveness of sins and to take rank, λαβεῖν κλῆρον, among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ. The verb κληροῦσθαι, to be received into the κλῆρος, had not at first the meaning of being ordained or consecrated

priest. It was applied to the conversion of Christians in general. Acts xvii. 4; Eph. i. 11, and still later, Epist. ad Diogn. 5, 4.

APPENDIX XLIV

1 Pet. v. 3; Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 41, 1: *ἕκαστος . . . ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι εὐχαριστείτω.* *Τάγμα = κλῆρος.*

Eusebius, H. E. V., 10, 26: Twice there is question of the *κλῆρος τῶν μαρτύρων* in the letter from the churches of Vienne and Lyons. For the order of widows, of "elderesses" or deaconesses, 1 Tim. v. 2-16. Hermas, "Past. Vis." II. 4, a function attributed to Grapte. Tertullian, "De Virg. vel" 9, etc., *vide* Zahn, "Ignatius u. seine Zeit," p. 580ff.

APPENDIX XLV

Tertullian is the first to speak of an *ordo ecclesiasticus*, an *ordo sacerdotalis*. He calls the bishop *sacerdos, summus sacerdos, pontifex maximus*, with or without sarcasm; "De Pudic.," 21; "De Bapt.," 7; "De Exhort. Cast.," 7, etc. From this period a divine reason for the choice of this word *κλῆρος* is sought by linking it to the sacerdotal institution itself. Hence the ingenious, but fantastic explanation of Jerome, Epist. 52, "Ad Nepotianum": *Clerici vocantur vel quia de sorte sunt Domini, vel quia ipse Dominus sors id est pars clericorum est* (Deut. x. 9, xviii. 2). Augustine's explanation is even less acceptable, Expos. in Psal. lvii. 19: *Et clerum et clericos hinc appellatos puto, quia Matthias sorte electus est quem primum per apostolos legimus ordinatum* (Acts i. 26). The dogma dictated both the history and the exegesis of the most learned Fathers of the Church.

APPENDIX XLVI

Mark xiv. 22, and paral., *τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου.* It is probable that the verb *ἐστιν*, the meaning of which has been so much discussed, was not expressed in the Aramæan phrase used by Jesus. Apparently there was simple juxtaposition; this bread, my body. One must be wholly unacquainted with Oriental languages and the *usus loquendi* of the prophets in general, and of Jesus in particular, to cast doubt upon the figurative meaning of this form of speech, so popular and so luminous.

APPENDIX XLVII

This view emerges with irresistible evidence from the most ancient liturgy of the Lord's Supper known to us, preserved in the "Teaching of the Apostles." "For the Eucharist, proceed thus: First with the cup [to begin with the cup is highly original and conforms to the Jewish practice. *Cf.* Luke xxii. 17]: *We render*

thanks to thee, O our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which thou hast made known to us by Jesus thy servant. To thee be glory through all ages! Then, over the broken bread: *We thank thee, O our Father, for the life and wisdom which thou hast made known to us by Jesus, thy servant. To thee be glory through all ages! As this bread was scattered upon the mountains, and being gathered, became one, so may thy Church be gathered into thy Kingdom from all the ends of the earth* (ix. 1-4). This liturgy is much older than the document which preserved it, and appears to be of Galilean origin. But it was not obligatory, for we read immediately after (x. 7): "As for the prophets, let them celebrate the Eucharist as they will." In any case, no mention is made either of the flesh or the blood, the body or the death of Jesus. With reference to the bread it is simply said: *Almighty Master, thou hast created all things for thy name's sake: thou hast given to men food and drink that they may rejoice and give thanks unto thee; and to us, in thy mercy, thou hast given spiritual food and drink and eternal life, by thy servant.* Apparently there was nothing else in the κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου which, according to Acts ii. 42 (doubtless reproducing a more ancient source), was celebrated by the first Judæo-Christian community of Jerusalem.

APPENDIX XLVIII

Irenæus, "Adv. Hær.," iv. 17, 5. In the second century the doctrine of the incarnate Logos ruled and inspired the entire doctrine of the Eucharist. Bread and wine were no longer ordinary bread and wine, but in the Lord's Supper, after the words of consecration, they were penetrated by the vivifying presence of the Logos in such wise that they rendered immortal the body that was fed by them, as the soul is saved and vivified by the Logos himself. The elements of the Supper were often likened to the flesh and blood which the Logos took on in the womb of his mother. Thus the Eucharist becomes the second form of the incarnation of the Logos.

Justin Martyr, "First Apol.," 66: *οὐ γὰρ ὡς κοινὸν ἄρτον οὐδὲ κοινὸν πόμα ταῦτα λαμβάνομεν, κ.τ.λ.* The bread and wine thus become the body of Christ, and the bodies which are fed on them become immortal like him. At the same time, this is not yet the dogma of transubstantiation, it is the mystical and mysterious coexistence of the two substances and two elements, just as in the man Jesus the earthly flesh and the heavenly Logos were equally real. Irenæus well explains this, iv. 18, 5.

This mystical point of view still permitted symbolical interpretations of the Supper. Thus Tertullian could explain the words, *hoc est corpus meum*, by *figura corporis mei*, "Adv. Marc.," iv. 40, and Clement of Alexandria and Origen were free to protest energetically against a materialistic conception of the Supper. "Pædag.," i. 6, 47: *τὸ αἷμα οἶνος ἀλληγορεῖται. Cf.* ii. 2. *Vide* Origen on Matt. xi. 14, boldly applying to the Supper what Jesus says of meats (Matt. xv. 11): "That which enters a man's mouth can neither defile nor sanctify him," and drawing from this principle all its consequences. But this spiritualism of a few high minds was

bound to lose ground. In the minds of the hierarchy, and in popular imagination, the materialistic conception daily took deeper root. Forbidden by John of Damascus, "De Fid. Orth.," iv. 13, it was proclaimed the faith of the Church at the second Council of Nicæa, Mansi, xiii. p. 266. Long before being defined by Paschase Radbert, the dogma of transubstantiation existed as a fact in the Catholic tradition.

This dogma permitted the reservation of the cup from believers. The body of Jesus, flesh and blood, being entirely in the host, the wine became a superfluity. It is difficult to see why it is given to the priests themselves, if not to do them honour. It is curious to note that the reservation of the cup, now the law of the Roman Church, had been condemned as a culpable heresy by Popes Gelasius I and Leo the Great. Gratiani Decretum de Consecr., D. 2. C. 12.

APPENDIX XLIX

Eusebius, H. E. IV. 22, 5; V. 16, 7; V. 28, 12; VI. 43, 5. Hermas, "Past. Mand.," xi. Tertullian, "De Bapt.," 7; *Episcopatus æmulatio schismatum mater est.* Cyprian, Epist. 59. Opatatus, "Adv. Parm.," iv. Epiphanius, "Hær.," xlii. 1, etc.

APPENDIX L

The eulogy which Ignatius bestows upon the bishop, and the part allotted to him, appear to be far more appreciative than those to whom Tertullian and Irenæus awarded it a little later. They have been held to be hyperbolic. They are simply mystic and may be perfectly understood from the point of view just brought forward. This appears with evidence from the following passages, "Ad. Magn.," iii. 1, vii: *Ὥσπερ οὖν ὁ κύριος ἄνευ τοῦ πατρὸς οὐδὲν ἐποιήσεν . . . . οὕτως μηδὲ ὑμεῖς ἄνευ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων μηδὲν πράσσετε.* "Ad. Trall.," ii. 2: *Ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἐστὶν. . . ἄνευ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν πράσσειν ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὑποτάσσεσθαι καὶ τῷ πρεσβυτηρίῳ ὡς τοῖς ἀποστόλοις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.* *Ibid.*, iii. 1: *τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ὄντα τύπον τοῦ πατρὸς, τοὺς δὲ πρεσβυτέρους ὡς συνέδριον θεοῦ καὶ σύνδεσμον ἀποστόλων.* "Ad. Philad.," iv., vii., and viii.; "Ad. Smyrn.," viii., etc.) Thence the idea that the bishop takes the place of God or of Christ, and that the presbyterate is like God's Sanhedrin, or the college of apostles. Thence also the notion that the true Eucharist is that of the bishop, that where the bishop is the Christian people ought to be, for the true church is where Jesus Christ is. All this forms an original and very intelligible system, very different from the one which will appear later. The theory of the apostolic succession of the bishops has no part here, and is positively absent from it.

APPENDIX LI

Tertullian, "Ad Martyras," i; "De Pudic.," 22. Eusebius, H. E. V., 1, 4, and 20; v. 2. Cyprian, Epist. xiv. 4; xix. 2; xxxiv. 4; xxi. 3; xxxvii. 4; lxxvi. 7. Origen,

"Hom. in Fum.," xxiv. 1; "De Exhort. ad Martyr.," 30 and 50. The martyrs were looked upon as exceptional Christians or saints, in whom the expiatory sufferings of Christ still went on. Eusebius, H. E. V. i. 23, says of a martyr: ἐν ᾧ πάσχων Χριστός. Whence their privilege and power to remit the sins of those who visited them in prison to ask for a note of absolution, *literæ pacis*.

APPENDIX LII

General Literature. Besides the documents cited or discussed in the course of the chapter, the Synodal Decision contained in the great collections of Acts of the Councils, the most complete of which is that of Mansi, Concil. Coll. Nova et Amplissima, 31 vol. in folio, 1759. Routh, "Reliquiæ Sacræ," iii. and iv. De Lagarde, "Reliquiæ Juris Ecclesiast. Antiquis.," 1856. Pitra, "Juris Ecclesiast. Monum.," 1864.

Apostolicas Constitutiones, Cotelier edition, and the entire history of their progressive formation. R. Rothe, "Die Anfaenge der christ. Kirche." Beyschlag "Die Kirch. Verfassung im Zeitalter d. n. T." Weizsaecker, "Das apost. Zeitalter." F. C. Baur, "Der Ursprung d. Episcopats." A. Ritschl, "Die Entstehung d. alt. kathol. Kirche." A. Harnack, O. Gebhardt, T. Zahn, "Patrum apostol. Opera," with texts, criticisms, and commentaries, from 1876. Hatch, "The Organization of the Early Christian Churches." E. Renan, "Hist. d. orig. du Christian.," especially the volumes on the Gospels, and on Marcus Aurelius. J. Réville, "Les origines de l'Episcopat," i.

APPENDIX LIII

Ignatius ad Rom. iii. 1; ἄλλους ἐδιδάξατε. An interesting story related by Eusebius vi. 2, 13, about a lady of Alexandria who gave impartial hospitality to Origen and a noted heretic, and invited them both to give addresses, serves to show the difference that existed between the doctrinal tolerance that prevailed in Egypt, and Roman practice. The catalogue of the New Testament books in the Muratorian Fragment, which may date back to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, is of Roman origin. The lists of the episcopal succession in Rome are of the time of Eleutherus or of Victor (180-195). Finally, the oldest apostolic constitutions bear the names of Clement and Hippolytus, who are Romans.

APPENDIX LIV

Vide in Eusebius v. 24, 2, the letter of Polycrates, "It is we who are faithful to tradition. . . . In Asia repose the bodies of those great men; Philip, John, Polycarp, Sagaris, Papirius, Meliton, who will rise again at the last day," "All of them celebrated Easter the fourteenth day according to the Gospel. . . . I, therefore, my brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, who have conversed with

brethren throughout the whole world, who have read the Holy Scriptures from end to end, I shall not lose my self-possession whatever may be done to frighten me. Greater than I have said: 'We ought to obey God rather than man.' . . . I could cite bishops here present who have come to see me, poor, forlorn me, and have given their adhesion to my letter, knowing well that I do not wear white hair for nothing; and who are assured that all that I do, I do in the Lord Jesus." To this noble and touching letter Victor replied by his decree of excommunication, which evoked protests from almost all the other bishops.

APPENDIX LV

Letter from Irenæus to Victor in Eusebius v. 24, 14 and 15: "Yes, the presbyteri who before Soter directed the church which thou now guidest, Anicetus, Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, Xyste, did not observe the Jewish Passover . . .; but, while they observed it not, none the less did they keep the peace with the churches that observed it. . . . Never was anyone repelled for this reason. On the contrary, the elders that preceded thee, and who did not themselves observe it, used to send the Eucharist to those who observed." He goes on to cite the example of reciprocal concord and respect set by Anicetus and Polycarp. The resistance of the bishops of Asia, supported on all sides, was not overcome. The question was not definitively settled until the Council of Nicæa.

APPENDIX LVI

Irenæus iii. 3. 3: *Θεμελιώσαντες οὖν καὶ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, Λίνῳ τὴν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρισαν.*

To the same effect Eusebius says, H. E. III. 2: *τῆς δὲ Ῥωμαίων ἐκκλησίας μετὰ τὴν Παύλου καὶ Πέτρου μαρτυρίαν πρῶτος κληροῦται τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν Λῖνος.* So also speak the Apostolic Constitutions, Rufinus, etc. To anyone even a little acquainted with the history of the early times the idea of an apostle-bishop is a moral impossibility, because the two terms are mutally exclusive.

APPENDIX LVII

Cyprian is the first writer who designates the Roman See as *locum Petri* (Ep. 52) and *cathedram Petri* (Ep. 55). But in his view the entire Episcopate is the successor of Peter, and the Bishop of Rome has no power over his colleagues (Ep. 33, 1). We must be on our guard in the "De Unitate," 4 and 5, against certain Roman interpolations concerning the primacy of Peter, which are wanting in the most ancient MSS. and in the first printed editions. Cyprian's true thought is found in Ep. 71, 3. And still more clearly in his adress before the Synod of Carthage in the year 256: *Neque enim quisquam nostrum episcopum se esse episcoporum constituit,*

aut tyrannico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem collegas suos adigit, quando habeat omnis episcopus pro licentia libertatis et potestatis suæ arbitrium proprium, tanquam judicari ab alio non possit, quum nec ipse possit alterum judicare.

APPENDIX LVIII

Acts xv.; Gal. ii.; Hom. Clement., "Ep. Petri ad Jacob." The Roman exegesis of Matt. xvi. 18, was a long time in winning its way, and its success was a more difficult feat than is generally believed. Most of the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries still stood for the spiritualistic or symbolic interpretation. The word πέτρα is generally understood of Peter's confession (Hilary, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Chrysostom) or else of the person of Christ (Jerome, Augustine), more rarely of the person of Peter. Jerome wavers (Ep. 15 al. 57 "Ad Damasum"). Even in the latter case, Peter is considered as merely the representative, the epitome, the symbol of the entire episcopate. *Primatum confessionis, non honoris, primatum fidei, non ordinis,* says Ambrose, "De Incarnat Domini," c. 4. Optatus Milev, "De Schismate Donatistarum libri vii."; Augustine, "De Diversis," serm. 108, and in Evang. Johannis tractatus, 124, 5, etc. *Vide* Casaubon, "Exercit. ad Baronium," xv. n. 13ff. and, to sum up, Gieseler, "Kirchengesch.," vol. i. part 2, p. 10. An interesting story might be told of the exegesis of the text of Matthew. It would be seen that exegesis did not always determine the evolution of the hierarchy, but rather the hierarchy that of exegesis.

APPENDIX LIX

Innocent I, Epist. 25, "Ad Docentium." Conc. of Sardis, Epist. "Ad Julium episc. Rom." (in Mansi, iii. 40. *Vide* Can. 3 in Mansi, iii. 23). Yet from the narrative of Hilary of Arles, the canons of the Council of Carthage (398), and the letter of the Council of Africa to Celestin I, the resistance encountered by this new jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome becomes evident.

APPENDIX LX

It is worthy of notice that in the West, even under Leo I, the bishops of Rome had no exclusive name or title. The names *Papa Apostolicus, Vicarius Christi, Summus Pontifex, Sedes apostolica,* were used of other bishops and their sees. In the East Dioscurus caused himself to be called οἰκουμενικὸς ἀρχιεπίσκοπος as Patriarch of Alexandria. The statement of the Roman Catechism (Pars ii. c. 7, quæst. 24) is a fable; according to it, Cyril at the Council of Ephesus called the Bishop of Rome *Archiepiscopum totius orbis terrarum Patrem et Patriarcham.* Clovis still gives the name of "popes" to all bishops (Mansi, viii. 346). In the Greek Church it continues to be the name of all clerics. Indefinite and general until the seventh century, the usage which reserved it as the unique title of the Bishop of Rome alone

was not fixed until the celebrated *Dictation* of Gregory VII: *Quod hoc unicum est nomen in mundo. Vide* Thomassin, "Vetus et Nova Eccl. Disciplina," Pars i. lib. i. 4, Gieseler, K. G. i. p. 228. S. Berger, Encyl. des sciences relig., art. "Pape," etc.

APPENDIX LXI

Leo, Epist. 10. al. 89, "Ad Episc. Provinciæ Viennensis": *Sed hujus muneris sacramentum ita Dominus ad omnium apostolorum officium pertinere voluit, ut in beatissimo Petro, apostolorum omnium summo, principaliter collocaret, et ab ipso, quasi quodam capite,* (this is new indeed) *dona sua velit in corpus omne manare, ut exsortem se mysterii intelligeret esse divini, qui ausus fuisset a Petri soliditate recedere.* And elsewhere, "Ep. ad Anastasium, episc. Thessalonic." 12 (al 14), c. 11: *Magna ordinatione provisum est ne omnes (episcopi) sibi omnia vindicarent, sed essent in singulis provinciis singuli, quorum inter fratres haberetur prima sententia, et rursus quidam, in majoribus urbibus constituti, sollicitudinem susciperent ampliorem, per quos ad unam Petri sedem universalis ecclesiæ cura confluereet et nihil usquam a suo capite dissideret* (See again Leo, serm. 82).

APPENDIX LXII

See how Justinian, with reference to church matters, addresses himself to the Bishop of Rome as well as to others (Cod. Justin. nov. 123, c. 3.) κελεύομεν τοίνυν, κ.τ.λ. See also the curious way in which Gregory the Great humbly obeys, though with protest, a law of the Emperor Maurice (Greg. M. lib. iii. ep. 63, "Ad Mauricium Aug."). *Utrobique ergo quæ debui exsolvi, qui et imperatori obedientiam præbui et pro Deo quod sensi minime tacui.* He recognises and proclaims the supreme authority of the emperor, to whom God has said *Sacerdotes meos* [including the Pope] *tuæ manui commisi.* It is by noting these attitudes that we measure the distance overpassed by the papacy.

APPENDIX LXIII

These "False Decretals" of the Pseudo-Isidore became the basis of the new canon law which took the place of the old. Without this document the development of the papal system to the universal theocracy of Gregory VII and Innocent III would be unintelligible. *Vide* David Blondel, "Pseudo-Isodorus et Turrianus vapulantes," 1628. Gieseler, K. G. ii. 1st Part, p. 173 and ff. Cunitz, Encyl. des sc. relig., art. "Decretals."

APPENDIX LXIV

The life and letters of Hildebrand prove that though he was animated by an absolutely sincere conviction, faith did not in his case exclude the dexterity at once

versatile and tenacious of the man of policy. To him, above all others, the Church owes it that she was constituted an essentially political society.

APPENDIX LXV

An ancient tradition preserved by the "Liber Pontificalis" relates that Everest, who comes fourth on the list of the early Roman bishops, "ordained seven deacons with the mission of watching over the preaching of the bishop, lest he swerve from the type of the truth" ("Lib. Pont.," 6). Evidently Everest held neither himself nor his successors to be infallible. This citation has another importance; it gives a glimpse of how and under what conditions the Episcopate was established in Rome. This church for a long time was content to be presbyterial. When it acquired a bishop, precisely about the epoch of Everest, under Trajan, the bishop must have had around him a supervising council. This is perhaps the historic meaning of this curious tradition, which must be very ancient, since after the third century it could not have been invented.

APPENDIX LXVI

Athanasius, "Historia Arian. ad Monachos," 41. Jerome, "Chronicle," edition Schoene, p. 194. "Catal. de Viris Ill.," c. 97. *Vide* Hefele, "Conciliengesch.," i. Gieseler, K. G. i., 2d Part, p. 60. S. Berger, Encyl. des sc. relig., art. "Liberius."

APPENDIX LXVII

Vigelius wrote to the Monophysite bishops Theodosius, Anthimus, and Severus, a letter in which he declared himself gained to their doctrine, begging them to say nothing on the subject, for fear of injuring his candidacy for the See of Rome, which he succeeded in gaining. The letter is preserved by the Chronicler Victor of Tunnum and by Liberatus, Breviarium, c. 22. The essential passage is as follows, according to Gieseler, i. 2, p. 367: *Me eam fidem quam tenetis, Deo adjuvante, et tenuisse et tenere significo. Oportet ergo ut hæc quæ vobis scribo nullus agnoscat sed magis tanquam suspectum me sapientia vestra ante alios existimet habere, ut facilius possim hæc quæ cœpi operari et perficere.* See also in Gieseler, *Ib.*, p. 370, his subservience to the orders of the Emperor Justinian, who caused him to write a declaration, which, however, he afterward withdrew. In a letter to Boniface IV, St. Colombanus, recalling the errors of Vigelius and playing upon his name, said: "Watch, I beseech thee, O Pope, watch! and again I say, watch! for that Vigelius was not vigilant whom men here show forth as the head of scandal, and throw him at our heads as a reproach. Well may we weep when the Catholic faith is not maintained upon the seat of the apostles." Colombanus was evidently ignorant of the dogma of papal infallibility (Gallandi, Biblioth. Patrum, xii.)

APPENDIX LXVIII

The heresy of Honorius is important only from the Catholic point of view. If a single Pope has been in error none of them can be infallible. Hence the incredible passion with which the case of Honorius was discussed at the time of the Vatican Council (*vide* the four letters of Father Gratry, 1870). Nevertheless the case is extremely simple. The letter of Honorius, in which the Pope shares the heresy of those who admitted only a single will in Jesus Christ, is found in a Greek translation in Mansi, xi. p. 538ff. The really grave feature of the case is the anathemas pronounced upon Honorius. The Sixth Ecumenical Council (Actio xiii in Mansi, xi. p. 556) after having condemned the Eastern bishops, Sergius, Cyrus, Pyrrhus, Petrus, and Paulus, adds: "We also exclude from the Church and declare to be anathema Honorius, καὶ Ὀνώριον τὸν γενόμενον πάπαν τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης. This anathema was repeated (Actio xvi. and xviii.). In his letter to the Emperor at Constantinople, Pope Leo II, one of the successors of Honorius, confirms and repeats the anathema (*Vide* Mansi, xi. col. 731; et ejusdem epist. ad Episcop. Hispaniæ, col. 1052ff). Finally, in the profession of faith made by the later Popes on taking their seat (Liber diurnus, 84, ed. Sickel, p. 100), a perpetual anathema is pronounced upon the authors of any new and heretical dogma: *Sergium . . . una cum Honorio qui pravis eorum assertionibus fomentum impendit.* If such a condemnation for heresy does not command belief, what one will? The defenders of Honorius have insisted that the acts of the Council and the letter of Honorius were falsified. Why should they have been, at the very time when everybody was conspiring to exalt the papacy? There were falsifications at a later day, but they were of the opposite sort, not to create scandal, but to do away with it. *Vide* Richer, "Hist. gener. concil.," i. p. 296. Du Pin, "De Antiqua Eccl. Discipl.," p. 349. Bossuet, "Defensio Declar. Cleri Gallic.," ii. 128. *Cf.* that edition of Hefele's "History of the Councils" which preceded the Vatican Council with the one which followed it.

APPENDIX LXIX

Gregor., Dictat. 22. The infallibility of the Pope himself is not here affirmed, but it is clearly understood that he is the mouth as well as the head of the infallible Roman Church, and therefore he represents its infallibility. Nevertheless, the distinction is always made between the organ of the Roman Church and the person of the Pope himself, and the possibility is clearly admitted that the Pope may err in matters of faith. Thus in a decretal of the monk Gratian (eleventh century) we read: *Papa cunctos ipse judicaturus a nemine est judicandus nisi deprehenditur a fide devius* (Gratianus, Dict. xl. c. 6 ex dictu Bonifacii martyris). The same thought is expressed by Innocent III himself ("De Consecratione Pontif.," serm. 3).

APPENDIX LXX

Innocent III declares that he is not the voice of a man, that is, of Peter, but of God himself (Lib. I. epist. 326, 335), that he holds a power not human, but divine, whence the glosses of the canonists: *dicitur habere cœleste arbitrium.—In his quæ cult, est pro ratione voluntas.—Nec est qui ei dicat: cur ita facis?—Ipse enim potest supra jus dispensare.—De injustitia potest facere justitiam corrigendo jura et mutando.* In fact, there have been canonists to say that simony was not a sin in Rome, because, though the Pope condemned it in others, he had the right to tolerate it in himself (*vide* Gieseler, K. G. II. Part 2, 4th edition, p. 224ff.

Hence the quasi-divine honours rendered to the Pope: All Kings should kiss his feet (Gregor, Dictat. 10). It is the Emperor's duty to hold his stirrup (*officium strepæ*). These are Oriental habits and forms of honour and respect which, at this period, passed from Constantinople to Rome.

APPENDIX LXXI

Gregor., Dictat. 7: *Quod illi soli Papæ licet pro temporis necessitate novas leges condere.* Sexti, Lib. Decretal., I. tit. 2: *Romanus Pontifex jura omnia in scrinio pectoris sui censetur habere,* a formula which became axiomatic in the Roman speech. There was, however, one eighteenth-century Pope, the learned and enlightened Benedict XIV, who doubted and made light of it. "If it is true," said he, "that in the treasure-house of my breast are hidden all law and all truth, I confess that I have never been able to find the key." Hase, "Hanb. der. prot. Polemik," 5th edition, p. 207.

APPENDIX LXXII

The simple and since then oft-repeated argument from Scripture in Luke xxii. 32, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." The reasoning ran and still runs thus: Every prayer of Christ was answered. This one must also have been. Unfortunately we find Peter denying his Master only a few hours after, and again, at Antioch (Gal. ii.), meriting the severe reprimand of Paul for weakness which went as far as hypocrisy. It seems to have been a peculiarity of Peter to be overtaken by temptation, to fail, and afterward to atone for his failures by repentance. This example shows how far our exegesis is from that of the Middle Ages.

APPENDIX LXXIII

Thomas Aquinas develops the papal attributes: *Summus Pontifex, caput ecclesiæ, cura ecclesiæ universalis, plenitudo potestatis, potestas determinandi novum symbolum.* He deduces the infallibility of the Pope from that of the Church. It matters little what the Pope is morally. Thomas cites the example of Caiaphas who, though

wicked, yet, because he was the pontiff, unconsciously spoke by the Spirit of God. Until the beginning of the fourteenth century, the papal system continued to be developed in a literature which was juridical to its remotest consequences. The two most extraordinary works are those of the Augustinian monk Triumphus, who died in 1328 ("Summa de Potestate Ecclesiastica ad Joh. Papam XXII"), and of the Franciscan monk Alvarus Pelagius, who died about 1340 ("De Planeta Ecclesiæ"). According to Harnack ("Dogm. Gesch.," III. p. 399), these two canonists actually distinguish between the Pope and God only by saying that the Pope should be adored only "*ministerialiter.*" Elsewhere they call him "*Dominus deus noster papa.*" Gieseler, K. G. II. 3d Part, 4th edition, p. 42ff.

APPENDIX LXXIV

In the rich literature called forth by the Vatican Council only a few names of the opposing party can be cited: Mark, "Du concile général et de la paix religieuse," 2 vols., 1869. F. Gratry, four letters, 1869. De Pressensé, "Le Concile du Vatican," 1870. Janus, "Der Pabst u. das Concil," 1869. Friedrich, "Geschichte des Vatic. Concils," 1872. Dupanloup, "Lettre sur le future Concile," 1869; "Réponse de Mgr. Dupanloup à Mgr. Dechamps," 1870 (Naples); among the lawyers: Mgr. Dechamps, "L'infaillibilité et le Concile," 1869. Manning, "Tradizione della Chiesa intorno all' infallibilita," 1169.

APPENDIX LXXV

Spinoza, "Tract. theol. polit.": *Non satis mirari possum cur inter sacros libros recepti fuerunt* (libri Paralipom.) *ab iis qui libros Sapientiæ, Tobiæ et reliquos ex canone sacrorum deleverunt.* Upon the question of Old Testament Apocrypha, the object of such long and sterile quarrels between Protestants and Catholics, *vide* E. Reuss, "Hist. du Canon des S. Ecrit." Evidently the Protestants had the worst of the argument, since they could defend their thesis only by attributing divine authority to acts of the synagogue and of Pharisaic Rabbinism, as they could defend the divine character of the New Testament only by admitting the divine character of the acts of the Church Fathers, of the Councils, and of a tradition which in all other respects they declare fallible and tainted with error.

APPENDIX LXXVI

Daillé, "Traité de l'emploi des Saints Pères," etc., 1632-65; "De Pseudepigraphis Apostolicis," 1655; "De scriptis quæ sub Dionysii Arop, et Sancti Ignatii Nominibus Circumferuntur," 1666. D. Blondel, "Pseudo-Isidorus et Turrianus vapulantes," 1628, and other works, 1641-49. This was the beginning of historic criticism and exegesis among Protestant pastors.

APPENDIX LXXVII

Alph. Turretin and J. F. Osterwald are witnesses to the weakening of the doctrine of inspiration. Both of them passed over to Arminianism. The former calls the Bible "a divine book" because of the excellence and the moral and religious superiority of its teachings. The latter distinguishes in the Bible between the express revelations of God and the things which the writers may have seen, heard, or known by themselves, and afterward related according to their own ability, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. The general divinity of the Bible is proved by the truth of its doctrines; by its moral effects, and by its miracles and prophecies. "Certain theologians," says Osterwald again, "have added to these proofs the witness of the Holy Spirit, which, however, some esteem of little probative value and superfluous." Nothing is more significantly characteristic of the orthodoxy of this period. A. Turretin, "Cognitationes et Dissert. Theolog.," 1737. J. F. Osterwald, "Compendium Theologiæ Christ.," 1739.

APPENDIX LXXVIII

Michaelis, "Dogm.," p. 92: *Ich muss aufrichtig gestehen, dass so fest ich von der Wahrheit der Offenbarung überzeugt bin, ich in meinem Leben niemals ein solches Zeugniss des Heil. Geistes vernommen habe, auch in der Bibel kein Wort davon finde.* Reinhard, "Dogm." p. 69.

APPENDIX LXXIX

In a history of the precursors of the religious and literary renascence of the nineteenth century there would be many other names to cite, especially of poets: Klopstock (1724-1803), Hamann (1730-88), Lavater (1741-1801), Claudius (1740-1815); especially Herder, with his thoroughly religious philosophy of history (1744-1803). Poetry, like flowers, is always the forerunner of spring.

APPENDIX LXXX

Chateaubriand, "Le Génie du Christianisme," 1802; "Les Martyrs," 1809; "l'Itinéraire," 1811. Mme. de Stael, "l'Allemagne," 1810. Fontanes, "le Jour des Morts," 1796. Early works of Lamartine, Victor Hugo, De Vigny. *Vide* Sainte-Beuve, "Chateaubriand et son Groupe," 2 vols.; Vinet, "Littérature au XIXme Siècle," vol. i.

APPENDIX LXXXI

For Puseyism *vide* "Tracts for the Times" (1834-39). J. H. Newman, "Apologia pro Vita Sua." C. Schroll, art. "Traktarianismus," in Herzog's Real-Encyclop., 2d edition, vol. xv. For German neo-Lutheranism, *vide* F. Lichtenberger,

"Hist. des Idées rel. en Allemagne," vol. ii. O. Pfleiderer, "Entwickelung d. protest. Theologie seit Kant."

APPENDIX LXXXII

Never did more profound piety go with franker criticism. This prayer was found among his notes: "O my God, give it to me to be true! . . . true above all as to thee, as to thy service. . . . Give me the truth, that I may be all light. Give me sincerity that I may manifest all the truth I know, unveiled and without reserve. May my heart be within me as the heart of the weaned child." Gréard, *Ibid.*, p. 86. Scherer, "La critique et la foi," 1850.

APPENDIX LXXXIII

It would be difficult and useless to give a complete bibliography of this controversy. We merely remark that the adversaries of the new theology may be classed in three groups, of which it is enough to name the principal representatives.

1. The thoroughgoing Theopneustics: Merle d'Aubigné; J. H. Darby; De Gasparin; C. Malan.

2. Moderate Theopneustics: L. Bonnet; P. Jalaguier. Next to Jalaguier and defending the dogma in the same essentially rationalistic way are: Chenevière; Munier.

3. Finally, the third party (since then become legion), represented by Astié almost alone: Scherer followed this controversy closely in the early volumes of the Strasburg review, and replied to one and all with caustic precision.

APPENDIX LXXXIV

Twesten, "Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik der ev.-luth. Kirche," 4th edition, 1838. K. I. Nitzsch, "System der christl. Lehre," 6th edition, 1851. J. P. Lange, "Christliche Dogmatik," 2d edition, 1870. D. Schenkel, "Die christl. Dogmatik," 1858-59. A. Dorner, "Entwickelungsgeschichte d. Lehre von d. Person Christi," 1839 and 1856. "System der christl. Glaubenslehre," 2d edition, 1886-88. Naturally the dogma of the infallible authority of the letter of the Bible is even more abandoned by the school of A. Ritschl, which has succeeded that of the "conciliation theology" (*Vermittelungstheologie*).

APPENDIX LXXXV

We may recall the words of Papias (Eusebius H. E. iii. 39: *οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων τοσοῦτόν με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον ὅσον τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης.* And further with reference to the *logia* of the Lord collected by Matthew: *ἡρμήνευσε δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἠδύνατο ἕκαστος.*

APPENDIX LXXXVI

Matt. xx. 25-27; xxiii. 8-12. *Cf.* 1 Cor. iii. 21-23. It is evident that the Roman Catholic Church, in its clerical hierarchy, its distinction between clergy and laity, and by the function of mediation and direction attributed to its priests, violates both the spirit and the letter of these words.

APPENDIX LXXXVII

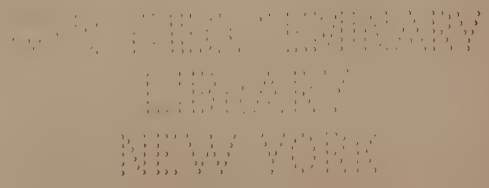
That the light which enlightens the Christian and gives perfect assurance to his faith is a light from within and not from without, nor from any exterior authority whatsoever, is proved by many other declarations of Jesus. For example, he had already said, "The pure in heart shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). Later he added "The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light, but if thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore *the light that is in thee* be darkness, how great is the darkness" (Matt. vi. 22, 23). From this we may understand the aim and end of all Christ's teaching. It is not to impose upon us by authority any belief whatever, but to enlighten us and make us see. His disciples are those to whom he has given sight, and who thenceforth may walk in all liberty and assurance by the light which he has enkindled within them. The authority of his person is therefore never distinct from the truth of his utterances. It is of such a nature that, being as sovereign and absolute as the authority of truth and holiness, it not only accords with our liberty, but creates it and makes it complete. Christ is the supreme liberator: by freeing us from evil he frees us from all servitude, and establishes us in royal liberty. His law is the law of liberty. (Jas. i. 25.)

APPENDIX LXXXVIII

2 Cor. iii. 18: *μεταμορφούμεθα . . . ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος.* 2 Cor. v. 17: *εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γεγονεν καινὰ τὰ πάντα.*

APPENDIX LXXXIX

1 Cor xiii. 9-12: *ἐκ μέρους γινώσκομεν*; Phil. iii. 15. Study especially 1 Cor. vii. 40. Giving his opinion without insisting upon it (*ἐμὴν γνώμην*) Paul says: "I also have the Spirit of God," not to the exclusion of the community, but in co-participation with it. The Thessalonian Christians also have the Spirit of God, and for that reason the apostle counsels them to examine all things, even what he is writing to them, and to hold fast that which is good (1 Thess. v. 21).



APPENDIX XC

Rom. vii. 6: *παλαιότητι γράμματος — καινότητι πνεύματος.* 2 Cor. iii. 6-17: *διακονία γράμματος — διακονία πνεύματος.* Rom. viii. 13, 16. Gal. iv. 1-5.

APPENDIX XCI

John vi. 32-63, the entire discourse upon the bread of life: xv. 1-7. Observe in both Gospel and Epistle the frequent use of the verb *μένειν*, abide. John v. 38, vi. 56, xv. 9; 1 John ii. 6, 10, 14, 24, 27, 28; iv. 12, 13, 15, etc.

APPENDIX XCII

I cannot refrain from quoting here a noble page of M. Ménégoz: "Ah, how great is the joy of him who has reached the certainty that an error of thought cannot condemn him, and that God, to receive him to mercy, asks only one thing: his heart. He blesses the Lord for having made known to him this good news, and freed him from doubt, disquietude, and fear. With peace of soul he has also found liberty of mind. He is delivered from the yoke of legalism and orthodoxism. He enjoys the precious liberty of the children of God. And now, with a calm, confident mind, without painful apprehension, and without endangering his inward peace, he may give himself to the study of traditional doctrine and of those numerous critical questions with which the modern world is preoccupied. Whether he finds or fails to find the truth, the salvation of his soul is assured." "L'Evang. du Salut," in "Publications diverses sur le fidéisme," p. 39).

APPENDIX XCIII

No one in these last times has contributed more to the recognition of this happy distinction than M. Ménégoz. *Vide* "Publications diverses sur le fidéisme," 1900.

APPENDIX XCIV

Cyprian, "De Unitate Eccl.," 6: *Habere jam non potest Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem.* Calvin, "Inst.," ch. iv. i, 1. *Cf.* Gal. iv. 26.

THE END

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